

THE ARGOSY.

SEPTEMBER, 1879.

CALLED TO THE RESCUE.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONSULTING THE ORACLE.

THE success of Professor Dangerfield, during the London season which had just reached its close, had been such as to surpass his most sanguine hopes. He had suddenly found himself the fashion; and by whatever means he had become so, the advantage was too great not to be used to the utmost. On the evening when he held his public séances, a crowd of carriages blocked up the street; and engagements for private consultations had to be made weeks beforehand. But, the season being over, the attendance had become more slack; and it was supposed that he would very shortly leave town himself, and carry his philosophy and its superhuman agencies to the seaside. And indeed, the stifling heat of that August evening, as Mrs. Archdale and Cecilia Wilmot drove up, made the former observe it was difficult to believe anyone would be in London by choice who could possibly get away. She was rather in hopes of finding the oracle had really closed its shrine for the present; especially when she perceived that there was no other carriage at the door.

"We are too late, my dear; let us turn back at once," said Mrs. Archdale, with an eagerness that showed how willingly she would have escaped the proposed adventure; but to this Cecilia turned a deaf ear. Leaving the maid in the cab, they alighted, and Cecilia's hand was reaching to the bell-handle, when the door noiselessly opened, and stood open for them to enter. With a glance of half-amused surprise at each other, they stepped in, and it closed behind them

immediately. They were in a small, well-lighted hall, with a staircase to the left, and a glass door facing them; but a curtain was drawn behind the door, and there were no signs of any porter, or servant, of whom to make enquiries.

"We had better go upstairs," whispered Cecilia, for the strangeness of this reception unconsciously hushed her vivacity; and without waiting for a reply, she led the way. The carpet on the stairs was soft to their feet, and there was a faint smell like incense, or pastilles, as they ascended. On reaching the landing, they paused in doubt, but only for a moment. A door on the right opened silently as the outer one had done, and admitted the ladies into an apartment, whose coolness and fragrance formed a refreshing contrast with the atmosphere outside. A silver sconce on a pedestal in one corner alone gave it light: but the window opened into a conservatory, illuminated by coloured lamps; they shed a soft hue over leaves and flowers, and added materially to the effect on the senses of the spectators. Sitting down in silence, waiting for whatever was to happen next, they did not venture even to look at each other, for fear of betraying what either would have been ashamed to own. Before their nerves had had time to harden into indifference, the sound of low, plaintive music completed the fascination, and it was with a thrill that partook largely of fear, that they suddenly found the Professor standing by them without any means of discovering how or when he entered the room.

He was considerably changed since they had last seen him. His deep mourning appeared only in keeping with the paleness of his countenance and the lines of care and suffering on his features. His hair, too, showed deep streaks of white; he stooped a little, and leaned on a gold-headed cane for support. As the music died away, he drew a chair forward and sat down, facing his visitors; who, as yet, had not mustered courage to speak or move.

"Mrs. Archdale—Miss Wilmot—you have honoured me with a visit at last. I have expected you some time. What can I do for you?"

"If you have expected us, Professor," returned Mrs. Archdale, recovering spirit, "you probably know that better than we do. We are come, like the rest of the world, to test your power."

"I remember, in our last interview," he replied, "you named a test that you would consider conclusive. But you are mistaken if you suppose my power, as you call it, is at the beck and call of every curious visitor. There are times when I can neither do nor show anything. To-night it is otherwise. All nature around us is alive, conscious of agencies at work; the animals are uneasy—the birds are wakeful—the flowers give out stronger scent. The very air is full of sounds, and weighs heavily on the burdened brain. It is on such nights that those gather round us whom we may not avoid, if we would."

"I had no idea," said Mrs. Archdale, demurely, "that the

weather had anything to do with your science. I supposed it was only our unfortunate flesh and blood that was dependent on English climate."

The Professor smiled; as one who would not deign to argue with ignorance.

"When you can explain to me why flesh and blood are themselves affected by atmospheric causes, I may be able to tell you something of what surprises you now. Meanwhile, the facts remain, and they accumulate an amount of evidence far beyond our means of collecting and studying them. You came here to test my power, you say. The challenge is not to me—but to those who may be listening—who may have brought you to this house. I give you your choice—will you go as you came, or carry through what you have begun?"

Before either of the visitors could answer, there arose a low moaning, as if the wind were rising, though the leaves in the conservatory remained motionless. There was nothing startling in the sound itself; but in the change in the Professor's manner there certainly was. He stood up, with his right hand lifted for a moment; and then turned to the ladies with a look of serious warning.

"I was mistaken; you have not time now to draw back; you must go on. Do not be frightened; remember that I am your friend, pledged to your service; and if you follow my directions without questioning, all will be perfectly safe. Come!"

He moved towards the conservatory as he spoke, and they followed closely; Cecilia holding her friend's hand, and squeezing it occasionally in her excitement, but not venturing to speak. A curtain they had not perceived before drew back as they approached. It admitted them into a tiny theatre; on one of the circular seats of which they were desired to take their places. The stage, if such it were, was concealed by its curtain, and there was only a dim light from some arrangement of lamps unseen. Their host had disappeared, and they were left to muse on their equivocal position; musings which soon found relief in critical whispers.

"Theatrical, of course; anyone can see he is an actor," said Mrs. Archdale. "That music and wind behind the scenes might all belong to the Dissolving Views in the Polytechnic. I hope he does not really believe we are so easily frightened."

"What would Mr. and Mrs. Bourne say if they saw us?" whispered Cecilia. "I would give something to have them both here, just to look at their faces. But there is one good point in the entertainment: they do not keep us long waiting. There, the light is being covered—that is quite correct; only hold my hand tight, for one cannot tell what they may be going to do."

The soft music had recommenced, and as the necessary darkness was attained, a row of foot-lamps shone on the stage, and the curtain rose.

Was it illusion—natural magic—or theatrical effect? For a

moment Mrs. Archdale hardly knew; but there sat a well-known figure—the head, with its white hair covered by a soft net cap, slightly bent forward—the hands clasped on her knee—the attitude that of a person lost in thought: but the whole effect so vividly real that the beholder made an involuntary movement as if to rise. It was checked instantaneously by a hand on her arm and the Professor's low voice in her ear. "Hush! be careful. You recognise her—that is enough."

In spite of pride, courage, and intellect, in spite of all she knew about skilful manipulation of mirrors and magnifiers, Mrs. Archdale could not repress a slight quivering of nerves: and when Cecilia whispered the question, "Who is it?" with difficulty replied, "My mother—a facsimile of her portrait."

"Take care!" said the warning voice again, as the figure began to grow indistinct. "You have seen her thinking—will you see her thoughts?"

"Do *you* take care," was Mrs. Archdale's almost indignant reply, though she kept the same guarded tone, "how you presume to handle a subject so sacred. It must be easier to show me her face than to enter into her mind."

"You shall judge for yourself," spoke Professor Dangerfield.

He gave a sign, and the form melted away, leaving another in its place, wrapped in a cloak that concealed all but the head, which was that of a boy. Lividly pale, the hair thrown wildly back, the eyes fixed with strange intensity as on some thrilling object in the distance, it was still the face of Paul. He might have been a portrait too, for the rigid stillness of every limb.

"Will you question him, as to what he sees—or shall I?" asked the voice at Mrs. Archdale's side.

"Do it your own way," was her impatient answer, "and I shall judge the better of your knowledge."

"Listen then, and judge. Paul! Is anyone here of whom that venerable lady was thinking?"

The boy's voice came back in a singularly metallic tone, every syllable distinct, though monotonous.

"There is a dark man passing with a child in his arms. He is standing now by the sea-shore; he carries something under his cloak. They are getting into a boat. Now I see him on board a small ship—the waves are rolling high—the wind is blowing—he keeps the child wrapped up in his cloak—and points to the shore. Oh, a storm is coming on! There! the ship is dashed against the rocks. I have lost him."

"Wait—and look again," said his master. "She remembered more than that."

"I see him now; and the little girl. They are in a place that looks like an office; a young man is talking to him—he counts him out some money. A mist has come over everything—she has forgotten the rest"

The boy's voice ceased. Mrs. Archdale sprang up.

"Is the man there still?"

"Hush!" said the Professor, again laying his hand on her arm. "Wait a moment. The boy will see him if he is. Paul! leave her thoughts. Go to his. Quick—now!"

The boy seemed to gasp and sob for breath, as he struggled to obey. "He knows he is ill, and has very little time, with a great deal to do. He wants to place her with her mother's friends, but he has no money—what he had has been lost in the wreck; he has only saved a box, with silver clamps. They are putting seals upon it, and the man in the office gives him a paper, and locks up the box in a cupboard.—It is all gone again."

"No, no—impossible! He must tell me more," gasped Mrs. Archdale, as the large drops of emotion stood on her brow. "If he can tell me where that box is——"

"Command yourself; he will try," said the Professor: "but this is exhausting work and he will not hold out much longer. Do you see him now, Paul?"

"Yes—he is lying on a bed—he can hardly breathe—he is cold—he is burning—he is dying. The young man has come to his bedside, and stoops over him, but shakes his head. I cannot go on—I am feeling ill."

"Rest."

Another sign was given; the boy disappeared; and as the curtain descended, the gas lamps were turned up, and the ladies could see each other's faces. Mrs. Archdale turned to question the Professor. But he had vanished also.

A few moments of silent expectation followed, and then Cecilia, perceiving that the door was wide open, whispered that it must be a hint that all was over.

Mrs. Archdale gave a sigh of impatience, and gazed around. There was no one visible of whom an explanation could be asked: yes, it must be over; and all they could do now was to retire as quickly as possible. The doors opened before them, as if in a fairy tale; but on reaching the hall, they perceived that one important ceremony had still to be gone through. A box with a slit in the lid, stood conspicuously on the table; and as soon as each lady had slipped in her offering, the hall-door opened, not widely, but just allowing egress, and closing the instant they had crossed the threshold.

The cab was still where they had left it, and the friends were soon on their way home. Neither spoke a word until they were safely indoors: and then Mrs. Archdale's first request was that Cecilia would not discuss the subject that night.

"I candidly confess that it has agitated me," she said, "and until I have thought it well over, I would rather not speak of it at all."

Next morning the breakfast hour was later than Mr. Bourne would have approved, and the letters were taken up to each lady's room,

before they met for the meal. Miss Wilmot saw at a glance that, whatever might have been the evening's agitation, morning had done nothing to lessen it for Mrs. Archdale. Her eyes bore the traces of tears; her manner was troubled and uneasy. She talked, as her habit was when her nerves were excited, on every imaginable subject, save the one of which Cecilia was thinking; and so rapidly that the latter had scarcely an opportunity of putting in a word.

It was really a relief to both when the door bell rang, and the servant came in to say that Mr. Frankland had called with a parcel for Miss Wilmot, and begged to know how she was? An eager summons was sent out to him at once, and he was received with a warmth of welcome that must have removed all fear, had he felt any, of being intrusive.

"I was coming up to town," he explained, "on business, and just at the last moment heard that Miss Wilmot was detained here under Mrs. Archdale's care, by indisposition; so I promised Sir Marcus and Kate to enquire as soon as possible, and send them a bulletin. Was it all a false alarm? Except that you are so late at breakfast, I can see no symptoms worth mentioning."

"You are paying my nurse and doctor the highest compliment, and if you can persuade your conscience to try a second breakfast, I can recommend Mrs. Archdale as a tea-maker whom you cannot take at a disadvantage," returned Cecilia. "She has always a reserve of power ready to meet an attack, no matter how unexpected."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Frankland, gravely; and a look at the lady in question was met by one from her, expressive either of warning or enquiry—he could not tell which. Mrs. Archdale did not repeat the glance, but busied herself with the hospitable duty assigned her, leaving Cecilia to support the conversation, which she was ready enough to do.

"And you have actually carried this dear little fern all the way, you benevolent philosopher! It is all the kinder of you, that I am convinced you despise ladies for making a fuss about ferns—just because they are the fashion."

"I despise no one for caring about a plant, Miss Wilmot. You are not obliged to describe it botanically, if you will only take care and keep it alive. Emily dug it up herself on purpose for you, because she heard you once say you wished for one."

"Very good of the dear child. How has she been lately?"

"Better for wholesome training, and freedom from trials of nerve. They have good hopes she will outgrow all her weakness, if those spirits let her alone."

"Take care what you say about the spirits," cried Miss Wilmot, quickly. "They can do very curious things. I only wish you had called yesterday. You should have gone with us, to be convinced, as we were."

"What have you been convinced of? Your own wisdom—or the reverse?"

"That is a question not to be answered in a hurry. Let it suffice you that we both went last night to test the Professor, in his own house ; and that we have not yet ventured to speak to each other of what we saw and heard."

"He must be cleverer, then, than I gave him credit for," added Mr. Frankland. "Is it fair to ask what you did see and hear?"

"Ask Mrs. Archdale. She and the invisible ones seemed to be on intimate terms last night, and she can explain what I could not."

"There was much more than I could explain at present," said Mrs. Archdale, reluctantly. "I own that, going as I did, thoroughly prejudiced, I was almost startled into credulity. Mr. Frankland shall judge for himself, if he be really curious on the subject."

Mrs. Archdale related the whole adventure we have already described ; and with a fulness of detail that showed what a hold it had taken on her imagination. Lewis listened with great interest, refraining from comment till the end. He then asked if she could at all account for Mrs. Raymond's likeness being in such hands.

"That is one point that is perplexing me," she replied, "for I cannot find the one I always have by me. Cecilia, my love, I was showing it to you yesterday, before I went out. Do you remember where it was put afterwards?"

"Oh dear, yes ; I locked it up in my table drawer," was the ready answer. "I will fetch it directly"—and Miss Wilmot hastened away. Mrs. Archdale looked after her, and gave an involuntary sigh.

"Did you see Ernest before you started, Mr. Frankland?"

"Not alone. I never had the chance. There was something I particularly wanted to know from himself."

"Can I supply the omission? Is it anything that concerns you?—or him?"

"It so far concerns us both, that, much as I value his good opinion and friendship, I should have risked them both on the answer."

"Then it is something that touches his honour, and his mother ought to be able to answer for him. Perhaps we are both thinking of the same subject. I heard from Grasmere this morning, and I believe the news I received was no secret there."

"It is all settled, then?" said he, abruptly.

"Well, my son naturally asks my consent, having his grandmother's approval ; but he knows well enough that I should never oppose his wishes, whatever might be my own. I only feel that it is a very unhopeful prospect, as far as their means are concerned, and I did think that something brighter was in store for him than a long engagement, and but little chance of ever being rich enough to marry."

"That is your only objection, then?" asked Lewis, with a degree of impatience in his tone, which she did not fail to observe.

"The only one I have a right to make. He is perfectly unfettered and free to choose ; nor can I say that his choice is an unworthy one. I think highly of Miss Granard in every respect ; save as to fortune."

"That sounded like a congratulation," said Miss Wilmot, re-entering. "Is it a matter of special interest to Mr. Frankland, Miss Granard's gallant preserver?"

The others exchanged a glance, as they had once before; and Mrs. Archdale, after a moment's hesitation, replied gravely, that a true friend like Mr. Frankland could not but be interested in the happiness of others. "He has been the first to offer me his good wishes for my son; and I must now ask for yours, my dear Cecilia."

She knew the blow would fall heavily: but by inflicting it thus, in public, the young lady's pride, perhaps her resentment, would come to her support. Though Cecilia unconsciously sat down, and had a moment's difficulty in drawing her breath, she kept up a brave appearance, and said it was only what she had expected to hear, after Mr. Archdale's desertion of the Bournes.

"But how could you keep such news to yourself till this minute, dear Mrs. Archdale? I saw something was on your mind, but I laid it all down to the spirits and the Professor."

"Ernest's letter was a surprise to me, my love," said the lady, unable to repress the tears that started to her eyes, "and I could not talk about it at first. It certainly was not a premeditated step on his part, or he would have told me before he went to Grasmere: they have been thrown together, and matters have settled themselves without consulting prudence. My dear mother is so pleased that I cannot damp her joy."

"Then, that was what she was thinking of when we saw her last night," said Miss Wilmot with mock seriousness; "and I do not know what you will say when I tell you that I cannot find the key of my table drawer anywhere. I must have dropped it when I was out. I only hope it was not on the Professor's premises, for the drawer is full of my secrets."

"I will go and see if one of mine will fit the lock," said Mrs. Archdale, glad to escape from the room. To her, Cecilia's forced gaiety was more trying than if she had seen her in tears.

The instant she was gone, Cecilia turned to Lewis, her manner strangely eager.

"Mr. Frankland, you are always kind and considerate; will you do me a great favour?"

"Anything that I can."

CHAPTER XXVI.

LEWIS'S MISSION.

It was, perhaps, a little disappointing to Lewis Frankland to find that Miss Wilmot only wanted him to execute a commission, though she owned, with a faint, uneasy smile, that it must be kept secret.

"If you could do me this service, it will be a real obligation, Mr. Frankland, and there are a few people in the world to whom it is

a pleasure to feel obliged. No, do not bow and thank me till you know what a troublesome thing you have to do. I expected a box to be left here for me this morning, and it is not come."

"And you wish me to see after it. All right. At which station?"

"At no station, but at a chemist's in Holborn. If you would be so very kind as to take this note—you will see the address—and bring back the box which Mr. Cloud will give you, I shall ask you to let nobody see it but myself, and to give it to me in private."

"That is quite sufficient, Miss Wilmot; I will go at once," said he, suppressing all surprise.

"I may tell you," she added, "that the box will contain some rather dangerous chemicals, for an experiment I am trying. Until I am sure of success, I do not wish anyone to know what I am about; and I am at a standstill for want of them. You are good-nature itself, so I do not mind telling *you*. Even if I were to make a complete failure—in every way—I know you would be too full of kindness to laugh at me."

His answer was to take her hand. For one second, she laid her other hand on the back of his, and glanced in his face; where the most respectful compassion and sympathy were too plainly shown to be mistaken. But not a word was said on the subject in both their minds, the engagement of Ernest to Miss Granard. Mr. Frankland hurried away to do her errand, promising to return to luncheon and be at their command all day.

"Poor bird!" he thought, as he strode along the streets, "the arrow has found its mark, but she hides the wound well. I only hope that this dabbling with chemistry is not playing tricks with her health. She certainly does not stand in need of beautifying lotions, for I never saw a sweeter complexion. Poor little thing! she wants a good adviser and friend. I wish Kate could have had her to train and comfort as Miss Granard has Emily."

Mr. Cloud was not in the shop, and Lewis had some little time to wait, even after the youth behind the counter had found leisure to summon him. At last he appeared, and on learning Mr. Frankland's errand, begged him to step into the surgery. Which, of course, Lewis did; keeping a heedful watch on Cloud the while, and revolving all he had heard from the Archdeacon and Sir Marcus.

In fact, Cecilia's errand, little as she suspected it, had given Lewis the opportunity he had wanted: and he was not the man to let any chance escape for want of energy. He waited quietly while Cloud read the note, with some difficulty, as it appeared, through his blue spectacles; and when it was being folded up, he asked if the box were ready, as he would take it back with him.

"I was in the act of packing it for Miss Wilmot," was the reply, "but these things take time, and require care. You are acquainted with the contents of the box?"

"I know thus much," said Lewis, "that they are chemicals,

connected with some experiment; and I only hope they are not dangerous, considering they are for a lady's use."

"I will not go so far as to say that, sir. The experiment is a dangerous one, and I should not recommend its being tried too often."

He was sealing up a small flat box, while he spoke. Handing it to the young schoolmaster, he added with a smile: "As you are in the young lady's confidence, I need not remind you that this should be delivered in private."

"That is understood. Is there anything to be settled?" added Lewis, seeing the dispenser making a calculation on paper.

Mr. Cloud looked up, as if surprised. "The fee is ten guineas," he replied, and went on with his notes, as if it were the simplest matter in the world.

"Ten guineas!" repeated Lewis, who, however he might be disconcerted, took care not to appear so. "That is nearly as much as you would receive for a surgical operation, Mr. Mowatt."

The dispenser's start was undeniable; his hands shook so much that he could not write; he tried to speak, but seemed unable to control the muscles of his throat. Turning away from the visitor, he went to a closet, and swallowed a mouthful from a small phial; then, after a short hesitation, removed his spectacles, and looked steadily at Lewis.

"Perhaps it would have been more courteous to have respected my wish of remaining unknown; men do not disguise themselves without a reason; but as you do know me, I may ask how you came by your knowledge?"

"By no treachery on anyone's part," said Lewis, good-humouredly; "you betrayed yourself to a great authority by your treatment of my friend Archdale after his accident. I promised Sir Marcus Combermere when I came to town that I would look you up, and try to deliver a message: which I will do now, if you will allow me."

"Wait, sir!—one moment!" said Mowatt, in violent agitation. He paced up and down the small apartment as if struggling to overcome some fierce emotion, to which he durst not give way. Once he seemed on the point of leaving the room. But he changed his purpose, sat down with his head turned away from Lewis Frankland, and his clenched hand resting on the table.

"Now, sir, if you will be good enough to deliver your message, I am ready to hear it. I have borne much already—I can bear a little more."

"If I have offended, or pained you, Mr. Mowatt, I sincerely ask your pardon. I had no intention of doing either. Two valued friends have talked of you to me, and I promised to see you myself, if possible. They would have selected a different messenger, could either of them have entertained a wish to add to your trials."

Mowatt bowed slightly, but seemed resolved not to speak, and again glanced irresolutely at the door.

"So far from this being the case," continued Lewis, "I believe I can give you the exact words which Sir Marcus used. 'A man of his abilities,' he said, speaking of you, 'ought not to be left in a position where he may be tempted, perhaps forced, to be the tool of others. If a brother surgeon's helping hand can save him, tell him he has only to stretch out his own.'"

"He said that—Sir Marcus Combermere?"

"He did; in the presence of Archdeacon Burleigh: who added his own message afterwards: 'Tell him from me,' were his words, 'that I have to thank Professor Dangerfield for a sharp lesson, which I ought to have learnt sooner; and that if Mr. Mowatt wishes to comfort an old man who has had his share of sorrow, he will let him shake one hand while Sir Marcus takes hold of the other.'"

"He has forgiven me, then?" said Mowatt, in a choked voice.

"If you know the nature of the man you need not ask that question. He does nothing by halves. If he thinks he has wronged you by his past resentment, he will not rest till he has made amends. Come, Mr. Mowatt," added Lewis, "I am a younger man than you, and have no authority to give you advice, but I can see that with two such friends, and, I may add, a third in myself, you have no reason to be downhearted. It is a long lane that has no turning, and if you really have a mind for a fresh start, here it is ready. I am authorised to smooth away difficulties as far as I possibly can."

He stretched out his hand, which Mowatt grasped in his, held tightly for a moment, and then let fall; his head dropping at the same time on his crossed arms, while his shoulders shook with passionate sobs. Lewis Frankland watched him anxiously, but refrained from checking the emotion: which might be a wholesome relief. Mowatt himself was the first to speak again.

"God bless you," he said; as he lifted his face from the table, "for your own kindness, and for the words you have repeated. Nobody knows but myself what it is to hear them, for nobody else knows what my life has been. But I can give you no other answer now. Unless it be this; to both your friends: Don't be so long another time, if you wish to save a miserable man—for it may be too late."

"I will not believe it," said Lewis; "it is never too late this side the grave. But I will leave you to think it over, and there is my card, if you like to look me up. I shall be a few days longer in town, and anything I can do I will."

Mowatt took the card, and, with a slight bend of the head, put it in his waistcoat pocket.

"And now about Miss Wilmot's business. I have not ten guineas about me at this moment, but here are two; and the balance——"

"There is no balance, Mr. Frankland. Two guineas are quite sufficient; and I beg you will not mention it again. If the lady will take my advice, she will give up these experiments, as they are more dangerous than she is aware of."

"I will tell her what you say," answered Lewis; and with another grasp of the hand they parted.

As the door closed behind the visitor, Mowatt sank down into his seat, his elbows on the table, his forehead resting on his hands. He did not stir, even when an inner door opened, and Cosmo Dangerfield, after cautiously reconnoitring the ground, entered, and stood at the other side of the table.

"A most touching scene—worthy of the stage," was the first remark of the Professor, after waiting for the other to speak. Mowatt slowly raised his head, but made no reply.

"A very clever, plausible move, I grant you," continued Cosmo, "and worthy of the men. You might have starved long enough in Belgium, Mowatt, before such generous hands would have been held out to you had they not suspected you were growing dangerous."

"I said it came too late," replied Mowatt, unable to repress a heavy sigh. "You are witness that I accepted nothing."

"True; I am witness; and very much edified I was by your behaviour. A very little more, and I should have joined the party, to ask if there was to be no place for me in such a general reconciliation. I can weep, if necessary, as touchingly as the best of you."

"Don't try it here, then, for I am on my own ground, and you might find tears unwholesome. It is quite enough to keep faith with you—I am not bound to stand insult."

"What do you call these messages, then?" demanded the Professor. "I spoke as I did to see if you had a spark of spirit left. What! send a young prig of a tutor to a man like you, with a verbal message implying, of course, that the wrong-doing was all on your side, and they were generously disposed to forgive you, now they found you might be up to something worse! and proposing that you should lead a new life, eating the bread of those who robbed you of your own! Is that such generosity that you can afford to crawl on your knees to receive it? It does not strike me in that light."

"Never mind how it strikes you. The words were kind, and I seldom hear such now, so it is no wonder I was a little upset. I shall not expose myself to another trial. Now I am discovered, this berth will suit me no longer."

"You are right, Mowatt. I have another ready for you."

"Where?"

"Can't you guess? I should have thought you might have seen the opening directly. My dear fellow, the ball is at your foot, and nothing hinders you from a splendid innings."

"If you will be a little more explicit," said Mowatt, wiping his forehead, "it will save your time and my patience."

"I will not waste either. As you justly observe, your place here must be given up. What is to hinder you from availing yourself of this opportunity, and by denouncing and renouncing me, winning golden opinions from all those whom I may count as my enemies?"

"Several things are against it," answered Mowatt. "To name only one: you have obliged me by help, which I have not, at present, the means of repaying; and it is not my way to turn round on those who do me a service."

"Suppose I could show you that it was the best way of requiting all obligation, and making a balance on the other side? Suppose that, by following the instructions I should give, you not only won friends among your old opponents, and gained a new career, and a probable fortune, but repaid me all my advances, and enabled me to dispense with your future services?"

"If that were possible, it would be a good day's work indeed. But it looks more like playing a double game than a winning one; and for that I am not prepared."

"Are you prepared for ruin—utter, hopeless, irretrievable?"

"No; and I would recommend no one to threaten me with it, Professor, yourself least of all. There are worse spirits to be called up by a hasty word than any with which you torture children."

Cosmo Dangerfield's face grew dark as night. His eyes gleamed with fury for a moment: though he controlled it sufficiently to make a calm reply.

"It is fit we should understand each other, Mowatt. I bear much from you on account of your skill; but if you pass the bounds of my courtesy, you must take the consequences. Dare, for an instant, to cross my plans; betray by a single word the trust I repose in you, and I shall know you are an enemy—and with enemies all is fair. What I should cover in a faithful friend, I should expose to scorn in a treacherous colleague; and I doubt whether your brother surgeon, or his venerable ally, would be ready to take your hand if they knew all it had been induced to do."

"Dangerfield, you are worse than I thought," gasped the unhappy man, shrinking back, not so much from the threat, as from the memories it invoked. "To make a man's past faults, instead of a ladder by which he may rise to better things, a rope to drag him down deeper in the mire, is a work for the author of evil himself—and if I had ever doubted his existence I must believe in it now!"

The Professor smiled as if it had been a compliment. "Remember this, my dear Mowatt: I do not allow myself to be trifled with by anyone who has once cast in his lot with me—on the other hand, no one who serves me well, and obeys me blindly, ever misses his reward. You have your choice to-day, which you will do. Either follow my instructions to the letter, and reap the good harvest which I foresee will ripen for us both; or break with me openly, and see what your forgiving and forgetting patrons in the North will do for you, when they hear what I should tell them. Choose, I say—and this instant; for I must know no friend nor foe."

"I have no choice; I must do your bidding, and you know it," said Mowatt, who had become very pale, but spoke with compara-

tive calmness. "I am only waiting to hear how my fortune is to be made. It has been a long time coming."

"Send out for a bottle of champagne, and I will show you."

Champagne was, as the Professor knew, Mowatt's favourite luxury, and their plans were generally matured under its influence. The fact of his proposing it was a token of his willingness to conciliate the vassal he had not hesitated to insult; a mixed treatment much resembling the policy he had followed with his deceased wife. Not till the glasses had been filled several times, did he resume the topic in the minds of both; and, this time, he spoke with the blandness of one who had only the good of his listener at heart.

"To go back to what we were saying, my dear fellow—I confess I did feel a little annoyed at such a palpable attempt to throw dust in your eyes with a few well-turned sentences. Every word was an affront in itself, and I could hardly help stepping out to send the young schoolmaster back to his Latin grammar. But since they themselves have commenced the game, it would be a great pity not to go on with it, and the sooner you quarrel with wicked Cosmo Dangerfield, the better. You are turned out of your employment—you have not a farthing to call your own—you are willing to starve, sooner than be his tool any longer; but after the generous offers made you by Mr. Frankland, you feel drawn to accept the hands held out in such cordial brotherhood—if only you can see Sir Marcus Combermere and Archdeacon Burleigh yourself; and hear from their own lips that they wish to be your friends. If the young gentleman proposes their coming up to town, you find that you are not safe there another day; Cosmo Dangerfield is on your traces, and spies out everything you do; the only plan is for you to hasten into the country as cheaply as possible, and lay the matter before them, wherever they are. Either at Grasmere, or at Comber Court, I need not point out what your next move will be; but you shall have full instructions nevertheless, Mowatt, and can report to me from time to time under some convenient private cover. The one person you must win, at all hazards, is my child's guardian, Miss Granard; it is through her only can we reach the child herself. I need not say that all idea of interfering with her custody of Emily is out of the question; the time for that is gone by. You have a serious task to perform—you have last words, wishes, warnings, to convey, and cannot acquit yourself of the duty without her assistance. If you are half as clever as I believe you to be, you will be intimate with the young lady before her friends find out what you are doing, and then the rest will be easy."

"Easy, you say—to play such a part before so many eyes, and not be found out as an impostor! And how is it that you like to trust me out of your sight? What is to prevent my doing in earnest what you are teaching me to do as a blind?"

"My dear fellow, it would be the making of us both, only I did

not like to press too much upon you at once. Whatever and wherever you are, you cannot escape *me*; and therefore it would only make our game the safer that you turned it into earnest."

"And how about your *séances*? Can you carry them on alone?"

"I could; but I have had enough of London heat for the present, and Paul and I are going to the seaside. And that reminds me—I am quite ready to give favourable terms for any authentic revelations; you managed so well last night that I was quite sorry when the boy stopped. Was all that story genuine?"

"I believe so."

"Can you follow it up? Have you a clue to the mystery?"

"Not quite yet; but I am on its trace, and when I am certain myself, you shall know more."

"Come, old fellow, a cheque will be worth more than a secret; name your price, and I will pay you cash down."

"Quite out of the question—you are the last person in the world to whom I would sell my knowledge. I repented of what I had done when I saw that lady's face."

"Nay, nay, you need not go so far as that; a little repentance may be useful, but too much would only hinder business; and after all—What now?" he asked, interrupting himself, as the youth in charge looked in from the shop.

"The gentleman has called again to see Mr. Cloud."

"Ask him to wait a few minutes."

The minutes seemed very long to Lewis Frankland. He was in a fever of impatience and vexation by the time he was admitted.

"I have done the most idiotic thing," he began: "left my parcel in a cab. I got into one to save time; saw a friend I had not met for years, and jumped out to stop him; never thought of the box till after I had sent away the hansom. I must give notice in Scotland Yard; only I may be asked what it contains. What am I to say? Dangerous chemicals; or what?"

Mowatt, whose face was now as much flushed as it had previously been pale, reflected a moment before he spoke.

"I had better go about it myself, Mr. Frankland. I should be very sorry if the box were damaged, and it will be a great disappointment to Miss Wilmot."

"But it will take up your time."

"My time, sir, is now all my own. Much has happened since you were here. Professor Dangerfield, of whom you have heard——"

"The greatest rascal living!"

"Well, that is somewhat strong language, but I am not going to dispute the point. The essential fact is, that he, the Professor, overheard some of our conversation, and he considers the messages you delivered tantamount to a corruption of my fidelity—I am here as his hired servant. Our discussion on the matter has ended in my leaving his service, and I have no other to look to, and nowhere to go."

"Then you are free, and can accept my friends' offers without a scruple," said Lewis, quickly. "It is the very best thing that could have happened, next to hearing that that fellow had been horse-whipped. I am not a fighter by trade, but I never longed to administer chastisement to anyone as to him. The worst of all cruel bullying is that which tortures nervous minds and tender hearts."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Frankland; and I could wish he were your pupil for the sole purpose of the correction. We will go at once in search of this cab, if you please; and settle our plans as we walk along."

Cecilia Wilmot was on the watch; and when her messenger returned, she slipped out to meet him on the stairs. His penitence and regret for the loss gave her a shock which explanation could not soften. He had made enquiries, and promised a reward; but, as yet, had heard nothing. Cloud hoped to get it by describing the contents, and he would bring the box himself as soon as it was found.

"I cannot express how vexed I am, especially as I see I have vexed you," Lewis added, with a sincerity that could not be mistaken, and Cecilia was unable to conceal her annoyance. A telegram had come from Mr. Bourne, announcing his intention to be in town that evening, and hoping the ladies would be ready to travel the next day; and the news had by no means improved her spirits. Lewis had never seen her so petulant and unreasonable; and yet she looked so pretty with her pouting and anger, and he was so convinced she had been hardly dealt with, and was suffering from wounded affection, that he pitied and forbore, and did all he could to atone for his carelessness. Mrs. Archdale lost patience at last, and told Cecilia she ought to be ashamed of being so childish—"anyone would suppose the box was of value."

Lewis fired up in her defence directly, observing that it must be expensive stuff, as the usual charge was ten guineas. The astonishment of both ladies startled him; and being called upon to explain, he had to confess he had paid Cloud two guineas, not having the rest about him. Cloud had behaved like a gentleman about it, and was satisfied with the amount; only he advised Miss Wilmot not to repeat the experiment.

Mrs. Archdale's keen eyes were on Cecilia, and she saw there was something wrong.

"Child," she said, going up to her with the imperious air she could at times assume, "I shielded you once; I deserve better treatment than to have my own weapons turned against me. Where is my mother's portrait? Is it in the missing box?"

Cecilia threw herself on the sofa, hiding her face in her hands.

"It is," she confessed. "I let him take it away. He said I should look into futurity if I did—and that much, much depended on it—your happiness, and that of—of several other people, Mrs. Archdale;

and though I don't believe in these things, I did wish to see what would come out. He promised it should be returned quite safely, and I meant to tell you afterwards; I did indeed!"

Mrs. Archdale turned away from the beseeching countenance, and walked out of the room. Cecilia burst into a passion of tears, and Lewis sat silently by, looking, not at her, but on the floor. He was very sorry for her mortification—he could hardly sit in the room and hear her sob—but the thought of her untruth was terrible, overpowering all the rest. It was like the fading of the rose glow from the mountain peak; the magic beauty gone—only the cold white of the snow left—the hard grey of the granite rock. Would any return of sunshine bring the illusion back?

Cecilia seemed resolved to try. It needed no monitor to tell her what she had done; and she roused her energies to the effort, sooner than lose all at one stroke.

"I know what you are thinking of me, Mr. Frankland, though you are too kind to remind me of my fault." And she poured out a confession of bad habits and failure of good intentions, as if she had been addressing an elder brother, whose rebuke she knew she merited, but on whose indulgence she relied. Without naming Ernest, she contrived to imply what she had been enduring from his absence, and from the news of his engagement; and the only excuse she attempted was that which she knew her listener would himself recognise—that she had felt for the time almost reckless—hardly knowing what she did. He was willing to believe it, and hope the best; her self-abasement, as she knew, made him all the more ready to take her part. She was not perfect, by any means; Kate Combermere would have scorned all these little windings and twistings, that to her seemed too natural; but when she owned her faults so touchingly, and asked advice how to conquer them, what could he do but comfort her?

His intention had been to return to the North by the night mail; but her urgent entreaties induced him to postpone the journey, and to promise to look in to see Mr. Bourne. And when the evening arrived, and Lewis called, according to this promise, he was shown into the dining-room, where that gentleman was sitting alone—wine and dessert before him.

"A strange state of things, this," Mr. Bourne observed, after pushing the wine and fruit to Lewis; "I thought young Archdale was a wiser fellow. But he must please himself. His mother never knew how to bring him up, and, of course, all he does is right—and now, instead of going down with us to-morrow, she talks of joining him at the Lakes. I must say, they are both cool hands; it will be some time before I ask them again."

Lewis made some good-humoured remark on there being a lady in the case. A dissatisfied nod was the only answer.

"There is no knowing what you youngsters aim at. I should have

expected that you, who were the lady's rescuer, would have been the chosen swain. Perhaps you did not give her the choice."

Lewis admitted the fact, while expressing sincere admiration and regard for Miss Granard. The old gentleman seemed to be pondering something in his mind for some minutes, when he abruptly asked his guest to go down to the sea with them. His wife would be sadly disappointed at the double failure, and would make him heartily welcome; and if he had a mind to ride, he could easily get a mount. Lewis thanked him, but was doubtful; in fact, though he knew it was dangerous, he could not decide till he had looked at Cecilia; one glance would be enough. If she really wished it, he would go—at all risks, and in spite of other plans; but if she was indifferent, all the better for both. In that case, he should start for the Lakes in the morning, and take Mowatt with him.

"So Mrs. Archdale fails you after all," he observed to Miss Wilmot, while handing her a cup of tea.

"Yes," was the dejected answer, "she forgives, but she cannot forget: and I do not deserve that she should. I shall not have a single person near me whom I care to speak to, and I shall have no rides, which I have been looking forward to so long. Could not you persuade yourself, Mr. Frankland, that your duty calls you to take a little sea bathing?"

"Duty is not the question; it is entirely one of pleasure. Mr. Bourne has been pressing me to go with you."

"You don't mean it? And you will, of course? You cannot refuse Sir Marcus's old friend, if you could be hard-hearted to—to me."

The last word was dropped with an arch glance at his face, and a wistful, half-sorrowful smile, that disarmed all his resolution. And Mr. Lewis Frankland took his seat by her side, and they made their plans for an agreeable week in Kent, as if neither had a thought beyond.

Mrs. Archdale looked at them as she sat apart, a slight smile curling her lip; but she was pale, and had an anxious, troubled expression, which Mr. Bourne could not help noticing. With more kindness than he usually showed her, he observed that she had been tiring herself in nursing others, and wanted rest.

"It is a pity you cannot come down with us, but I quite understand why you are wanted elsewhere. Have you a decent pen here, Cecilia?"

She brought him her own dainty writing-case. He tumbled it over in quest of a plain sheet of paper, everything being decorated with monograms and devices innumerable. Having written a few lines, he folded them into her largest envelope. With this in his hand, he sat down by Mrs. Archdale, to talk over Ernest's prospects. He was a man who could be very tiresome in small matters, and show real kindness about great; and he seemed anxious to prove to her and himself

that what he had heard could make no difference in his goodwill. Ernest had shown a capacity for work, far exceeding his expectations, and his plan now was to give him a settled position in the business, with a liberal salary; not enough to marry upon, but sufficient to make him comfortable until he could become a partner. To do that, he must be able to throw some capital into the concern, and in time, when the old man wore out, he would be the actual and working head. "By that time, Miss Granard will be at liberty, if the poor child lives, and then they can do as pleases them, and you," concluded Mr. Bourne.

Mrs. Archdale took his hand, and pressed it in both her own. He gave hers a hearty squeeze, and left her with the letter he had just written, in her lap; walking away himself to the conservatory, where he was accustomed to indulge in a cigarette, for the benefit of the geraniums. She opened the envelope—it contained a few lines of congratulation, and a cheque for fifty pounds.

At that moment the servant entered, and announced Mr. Cloud. He had called to see Miss Wilmot.

Cecilia looked at Mrs. Archdale in dismay, for Mr. Bourne was not quite out of hearing. She understood the appeal.

"I will go and speak to Cloud, my dear. I will tell him you require no more attendance."

As she left the room, Mr. Bourne looked in from the conservatory. "Who is it, Cecilia?"

She held up her finger to Lewis, with an arch look, and tripped across the room to explain—not exactly the true facts of the case, but as many as were expedient. While Mrs. Archdale hastened to the library, where Mowatt was waiting.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DANGEROUS ALLY.

IF Mrs. Archdale could, as we have seen, be caressing and gracious on some occasions, and to some people, she could also be extremely distant—almost haughty; and it was with this last mood in the ascendant that she greeted the visitor, in whom she only recognised the dispenser specially favoured by her son. In a tone of semi-civility that savoured of command, she thanked him for his trouble on their behalf, and requested he would deliver to her the parcel which Miss Wilmot expected, if, as she hoped, he had brought it.

"Shall I not have the pleasure of seeing Miss Wilmot?" asked Mowatt, nothing abashed by his reception.

"You must excuse her this evening; she is particularly engaged. It matters the less, that I am in the secret of her chemical studies, Mr. Cloud, and can be indulgent to a girlish prank, played in perfect innocence of intention—however I may feel towards those who deliberately turned it to their own purposes."

"Meaning whom, madam, may I ask?"

"Whom should I mean, sir, but those people who borrowed my mother's likeness, in order to make a theatrical effect at a pretended revelation? I was there myself, so I was able to judge how far the occult science would presume to go; and all I can say is, I hope it is the last time that the spirits, or their mediums, will take the trouble to meddle with my family affairs."

"Without entering into an argument, Mrs. Archdale, I may just observe, that your paying a visit to the Professor was not quite consistent with your avowed disbelief; and so far from really wishing that no more trouble should be taken in the matter, the darling wish of your heart, at this moment, is to know what would have been revealed if the boy had held out five minutes longer."

"Do *you* know?" she asked, eagerly; quite thrown off her guard. He shook his head with an ironical smile.

"My offence, if I have committed one, was in mentioning to Miss Wilmot the remarkable phenomena I have myself witnessed at Dangerfield's séances; and suggesting the method by which some light might be thrown on a period of your family history, on which your son's mind has been greatly exercised of late. In the peculiar state of his brain, it was a relief to tell me his dreams and fancies, and to explain how they arose; and the facts, as far as they are known, were not difficult to impress on the mind of the boy, Paul. The process by which it is done is the secret of the philosopher you consulted. But, as you no doubt were aware, his revelations went beyond those facts; and he had begun to read a page of the past which no one else could decipher. You said that yourself."

"I did; and I own to having been startled and interested; though I ought to be ashamed of such weakness. How could he know what happened so many years ago, of which no one, as far as we can learn, has ever heard? Confess the truth, Mr. Cloud—it was a melodramatic effect, got up for a purpose—and would be repeated, with suitable alterations, before the next enquirer, public or private, who appeared likely to make it worth while."

"If it were the truth, I might confess it, certainly," was the reply. "But for all your scorn and satire, Mrs. Archdale, you know it is not your real opinion—and I can assure you it is not mine."

"It is most extraordinary!" she murmured, half to herself, half to him; "it is what I could not have believed had I not been there. Mr. Cloud, what do you think? what do you advise? Should I learn more by another visit?"

"Yes, madam. You might learn, if you chose, that it is dangerous work to insult one moment, and invoke the next. In your present state of mind, I should recommend your letting the matter alone."

"This is insolence, sir! My son would not allow it if he were here. Be so good as to give me my picture, and to tell me what we are indebted to you for your trouble."

He laid the box on the table, but stopped her as she drew out her purse.

"Your son has always treated me like a gentleman; and for his sake I would bear a good deal; but do not go too far. If you owe me anything, Mrs. Archdale, it will be for this last piece of advice—have nothing more to do with Dangerfield, either in this, or any other matter. It is the more valuable, that I know you will not follow it." He took up his hat as he spoke, made her a bow, and departed before she could resolve what to say.

Humiliated, incensed as she was, it was rather difficult to return to the drawing-room with a gentle smile on her face, letting Cecilia see what she had in her hands, and that the act was forgiven: and to take an early opportunity, with tears just kept back in her still handsome eyes, of showing Mr. Bourne how she felt his kindness. This done, however, she took her work; and while Cecilia was playing her guardian's favourite waltzes, and Lewis turning over the pages, she could muse over what she had heard, and resolve on what should next be done.

The result of these musings justified Mowatt's sarcastic farewell. Mrs. Archdale left Mr. Bourne's house early the next morning, and returned to her own lodgings. From thence she wrote a note to Professor Dangerfield, requesting the favour of a private interview.

"You were good enough to call yourself my friend on a former occasion," were the concluding words of her billet; "it will be an act of real friendship if you can relieve the anxiety under which I am at present labouring."

She sent the note by a messenger, with injunctions to obtain an answer if possible; but he brought back word that he could make nobody hear the bell, therefore contented himself with dropping the note into the box. She waited at home, growing more and more impatient every hour; and about six o'clock, when she had begun to despair, a brougham drove up to the door, and the Professor's black-edged card was followed by himself in person.

Mrs. Archdale was struck, as perhaps the Professor meant her to be, with the change in his appearance. He had contrived to assume the complexion, the bearing, the whole effect of one whose strength was wearing away under the pressure of some heavy burden. A preoccupied manner, a look in his eyes as if gazing on the unseen, a hollowness in his voice, were all palpable witnesses to the truth of the popular report—that he was, in some way or other, a haunted man.

She could think of no other epithet as he stood before her.

"You have done me the honour of appealing to my friendship," he said, when Mrs. Archdale began to apologise for troubling him, "and so few now do so, that it is irresistible, and I have broken through my rule. How can I serve you?"

"How can you ask such a question?" retorted Mrs. Archdale.

"You know how abruptly your séance ended the other night. There must be more to follow, and you best know what it is."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Archdale; it is just one of those cases in which the prejudice of the world convicts itself. If, as some would tell you, the whole were a dramatic trick, of course I could go into the next act; but there is the difficulty. The boy failed us in the middle, and the wave of inspiration passed over his head, and left him—exhausted enough, poor fellow, but no wiser as to the rest than you or I."

"And cannot the inspiration be recalled?" she asked, unconsciously accepting the expression, at which in her cooler moments she would have been shocked.

"Those things are so uncertain—so difficult—so hardly won, that I can promise nothing. You said once that you would be convinced if a certain test were satisfactorily applied; and now I call upon you to say whether it has been, or not—whether you have not already learned something which you could not learn elsewhere."

"It is quite true," she replied, agitated in spite of herself, "and therefore it is that I crave to learn more. My happiness, and that of my son—as well as that of my mother, may all be in your hands, Professor. I need not say how gratefully we should acknowledge and reward the information that would be of such value. I am too ignorant to give any opinion upon the phenomena I witnessed; if the subject could be sifted thoroughly, I am willing to do whatever is in my power, confident that you will ask me nothing unreasonable."

"Nothing unreasonable, Mrs. Archdale? Is it a case for reasons, do you suppose? Have you the smallest idea of the means by which I must satisfy you, if I do it at all?"

She was silent; for, unwilling to offend him, it was rather a difficult question to answer.

"What you heard that night," he went on, "was partly known to you already—granted. But you were startled to hear a sequel begun, which no living tongue could have related. Those secrets, hidden from us, are known to those who walk among us unseen; and, if I attempt to recover the thread of that lost vision, it must be at a tremendous cost."

His face, as he sat opposite to her, confirmed his words; she felt her blood chilling in her veins, even while she told herself that it was not true. Preferring to appear less intelligent than she really was, she drew out her purse, which Mr. Bourne's gift had so seasonably replenished.

"I have but little in my power at present, Professor; and can only offer you a small fee for immediate expenses"—she slipped a bank note into his hand—"but should our fortunes be mended through your help, I pledge myself to a liberal remuneration. Nay, sir, you must oblige me," as he made a show of refusal. "I know expenses must be incurred, and only regret I can do no more."

"You must do more, Mrs. Archdale, if you are in earnest. Your money will be useful, but money alone will not be enough. Where is your son?"

"At Grasmere, with his grandmother," she replied, not a little startled by his tone.

"When is he to be married?"

"Indeed, sir, I cannot tell you. His engagement is too recent—I have not seen him since he announced it."

"His choice is what you approve?"

"Of that you may be certain, or he would not have made it. You should be the last person to doubt the excellence of such a choice, considering the charge that she was selected to undertake."

"She? I beg your pardon—are we speaking of the same person?"

"I conclude we are. The young lady who is engaged to my son is Miss Granard. I spoke of her."

For days afterwards Mrs. Archdale was unable to forget the strange look that swept over the subtle actor's face, when that name was uttered. He did not speak for a few moments, but his eyes were fixed on hers, no longer with their haggard, dreamy expression, as if seeing invisible and fearful things; but keen, concentrated, and thoughtful, as ideas revolved themselves rapidly in his fertile brain.

"I understand," he said, presently, "your son is engaged to my poor child's guardian. If they marry, she will live with them—and, I conclude, his mother will not be far off. It is a happy prospect for Emily—I congratulate you all."

"Do not be in too great a hurry, Professor; there is no chance of such an establishment at present. My son only hopes for it as a future to be won; Miss Granard considers her duty to her ward as taking precedence of all others; and their means are not such as to warrant their marrying for some little time."

"Mrs. Archdale"—his head bent nearer to hers, and his voice dropped to a whisper—"are you prepared to follow my counsel, for your own good, and your son's? If you are, and will act according to instructions, I see—what no one else can—a way to the attainment of your wishes. What it will cost me—not in money, but in suffering, such as I could never describe—I will not think about now; it is the one chance that is given us, and I am prepared to seize it."

"Will you explain yourself more clearly? I can promise nothing beforehand," she said, but her breath came short and quick with expectation: and as he proceeded to unfold his plan, still in the guarded whisper with which he had begun, her eyes dilated, and her lips parted unconsciously. Once she was about to start from her seat, but his finger on her arm restrained the impulse, and she heard him to the end. The conference that ensued lasted about half an hour, and then the Professor took his leave.

Mr. Dangerfield had only time for a hasty dinner before giving

one of his experimental lectures to a curiously mixed audience : who came to be amused, and applauded everything. It was ten o'clock before the house was clear, and he was glad to find Justine ready with a cold collation, and iced hock-and-water—in that temperature a most grateful beverage. His lips were parched, and he took a deep draught before he even sat down. Then he signed to her to stay in the room.

"Where is Paul?"

"Gone to bed—quite knocked up with the heat, poor boy. This English climate will be the death of us all," added Justine, dismally.

"I thought he looked as if he had had enough for the present; I mean to give him change of air. Did he sup?"

"He tried to swallow a crust, but it would not do. He has worked too hard, monsieur; and to-night he had to do double duty."

"Yes, the doctor's place is not easy to fill up: but we are safer without a false friend, Justine. He never trusted you, you know."

"Nor you either, monsieur; and Mowatt may have had his reasons. For my part, I owe him no ill-will. He did me injustice, and I have forgiven him: that is all."

"A most virtuous and excellent action on your part, my good woman," remarked the Professor. "Now get me a tray and another plate, for I mean that boy to have a mouthful of this ham and chicken, and a glass of hock. He will sleep all the better for it. No, do not trouble yourself, I am going to see him eat it. He will obey me, when I say it must be done."

Justine stared, but kept her thoughts to herself, and only took the precaution of creeping up stairs after her master, and listening at the keyhole of Paul's door; a means of acquiring information which was somewhat crippled by her imperfect knowledge of the English tongue, and which only her fears for the boy's safety would have tempted her to employ. There was, however, no cause for uneasiness in the Professor's behaviour; he entered the room quietly, and when Paul, whose sleep appeared uneasy, turned his hot head towards the light and opened his eyes, he sat down by the bed, taking in his own strong hand the slight one hanging over the blanket.

"You are not sleeping comfortably, my lad. Wake up, and let me see if I cannot set matters straight."

Paul obeyed, and sat up in his bed, hiding the light from his dazzled eyes, and expecting to be ordered to dress and get to work. But the tones of his master's voice were friendly and considerate, and when he found a tray of tempting refreshments before him, and was invited in hospitable terms to fall to, he soon discovered that he was both hungry and thirsty, and emptied cup and platter to their mutual satisfaction.

"Very kind of you, sir, to take so much trouble," he said, as the Professor, with a good-humoured nod, removed the tray.

"Well, I should not take it for everybody; nor for you, if I did

not see you deserve it. Justine told me you had had no supper, and I thought you looked done-up. I have been making a plan to give you a holiday and change of air. Would you like to hear about it now?—or will you go to sleep, and wait till to-morrow?”

“Oh, I couldn’t sleep again yet awhile, sir,” was Paul’s uneasy answer. “Am I to go across the water again?”

“Not if I can help it. I want you to go down into the North—among your old friends.”

“What to do, sir, please?” And there was a touch of distrust in his voice, for which his master was quite prepared.

“No harm to anyone, my boy. You must understand that the law has given the charge of Miss Emily to Miss Granard, and, therefore, anyone attempting to divide them would be liable to punishment. It is to do your other master, Mr. Archdale, a service, that I want you to go.”

“Please, sir, I would be glad enough: only I can’t answer for myself if he talks to me.”

“He shall not try you in that way, Paul; I can send you among them all, without one of them knowing who you are. You can play a part well enough without me at your elbow to prompt you?”

“Yes, I think I can,” said Paul, who thought this sounded more promising.

“When you played so well the other night, that I was almost taken in myself, did not you want to go on and finish the scene? I did, for there must have been a good deal to follow, that would have interested more than you and me.”

“The doctor knows more than we do, that is certain,” said Paul.

“He does; and he means to turn it to his own advantage. Now I am pretty nearly sure that on his secret hangs the making of Mr. Archdale’s fortune, and that secret you must get hold of. The doctor is playing on both sides—and I distrust him; and those whom I distrust I very soon clear out of my way. He is gone down to Grasmere, under the semblance of an interesting penitent, meaning to get what he can out of the liberality, or the weakness, whichever it may be, of Sir Marcus Combermere and the old Archdeacon. You must follow him, keep an eye on all he does, and, in some way or other, get hold of any papers he may have with him. I suspect he keeps some locked up in that travelling-pouch of his, and that they are papers he has no right to.”

“He has been attending Mr. Archdale,” said Paul, musing. “Perhaps he has told him all about it, and that is why he wants to go to Grasmere after him.”

“Scarcely, my boy. On the contrary, Mowatt has gathered from young Archdale all the particulars he wanted, and now he means to throw him over—instead of doing him justice.”

“If I thought that, sir——”

“I am sure of it, Paul; I took care to sound him on the matter

myself. I do think it hard that a young man should be grinding at a desk when he ought to have money of his own—though I suppose his grandmother would inherit first. They little guessed, that night when you were in her house, that you might be the lucky star that was to make them rich."

"I should like to do that well enough," said Paul, with a nod; and with that his master was satisfied. He patted his shoulder, bade him lie down and sleep while he could, and said he should call him at five, that he might be ready for the mail train.

"There will be a little dressing-up necessary first, so we must give ourselves plenty of time," he observed: and, as he moved to leave the room, the faithful Justine fled from the keyhole.

Justine had heard and understood only a part of the conversation, but her anxiety was so far relieved, that she saw her master had work in hand for Paul to do, and, therefore, meant him no harm. All that night she was kept busily employed in assisting at the needful preparations, of which it is not necessary to give an account. Suffice it to say, that when Professor Dangerfield started the next morning for the King's Cross Station, it was to take a ticket, and arrange the departure of a red-headed lad, in the dress of a helper, who was joined by two dark-complexioned gentlemen, in charge of a horse. It was rumoured among the porters that the latter was of some notoriety, and that it was on its way to a highly aristocratic stable. A little difficulty had been experienced in getting it into the van, but the red-headed boy had quieted the animal in a moment, and chose to remain with him in the van.

The whole party, horse included, went by the train to Windermere, and thence proceeded to Ambleside, where they took up their quarters, awaiting, as they gave out to anybody whom it might concern, the arrival of the stud-groom, who was to close the bargain for the great man. Meanwhile, as the horse must be exercised, the lad had to ride him, and his first airing was to Grasmere.

Now Grasmere, with all its attractions—and they are many—cannot exactly be termed so lively a place, that an incident, or a novelty, is not generally acceptable. Before Paul and his steed had halted many minutes at the first hotel he reached, where he called for a glass of beer, several intelligent persons had gathered round to look at the horse, and speculate on his merits—ask his price, and what he was expected to do. One of these was Miss Granard's servant, Charles; who, it must be confessed, sometimes found his time hang a little on his hands, and did not object to a friendly chat now and then, especially about horses. Paul held his breath at first, as his old acquaintance came up, but when he saw he was not recognized, rather enjoyed the disguise, true-born actor that he was. His story was pat and plausible. The horse belonged to the great dealer, Mr. Lazarus; and two of his men were at Ambleside, waiting to complete the sale to a nobleman; his own part was the riding of the horse, as

neither of them could hold him. And he told some exaggerated stories of the animal's fiery temper, in a lazy, drawling voice, that amused his audience mightily. In the midst of the laughter thus excited, another voice, from an unexpected quarter, suddenly exclaimed, "Why, that is Cairngorm!"

Paul turned, and touched his cap, speaking more lazily than before. "That's about what it is, sir: proud to find some one as knows us."

"I have a good right to know the horse and remember him, my lad, for he and I came to grief together," said Mr. Archdale. "Ah! they have patched you up, Cairngorm, as they have me; but neither of us can pretend to be ever quite sound again."

"Beg your honour's pardon," drawled the Professor's emissary, "but be you belonging to his lordship as wants the horse?"

"I belong only to myself, my boy," said Ernest, good-humouredly.

"And maybe your honour wouldn't care to have yourself cried down just when you wanted to strike a bargain?"

"You are welcome to cry me down, so long as you only say what is true. I believe neither Cairngorm nor I had fair play—had we, poor fellow?" he added, stroking the horse's neck, while his heart swelled within him at the recollections it called up. How long ago it seemed—how completely life had changed for him since that terrible day! how utterly impossible it would be to recall the state, either of mind or body, in which he had last sprung into Cairngorm's saddle!

"I wonder if he would know me again—I was the only one then who could do anything with him," he observed, presently; convinced that the red-headed groom was eyeing him somewhat sarcastically, as if dubious of his powers. Paul, with a patronizing air of amusement at the gentleman's fancy, threw one leg over the saddle, and let himself leisurely down.

"If your honour likes to change places with me, I've no objection. I daresay I could fill your seat as neatly as you will mine."

But with all his assumed impertinence, he kept a heedful eye and hand on Cairngorm's rein, even after the young man had mounted. A precaution justified by the event, for the animal no sooner felt the additional weight than his eye began to kindle and his nostrils to expand, while the pawing of his hoof warned those crowding round to give him a wider berth.

"Let go, my lad!" said Ernest, quickly, for he knew what was coming; and, as Paul hesitated to obey, struck him smartly on the wrist, just in time. Cairngorm made a bound, spun round on his hind legs, and then bolted in the direction of a fence, over which he flew, landing on soft turf, the touch of which only added to his excitement. But the hand on the bridle had recovered much of its cunning, and there was something in the sensation of being once again in the saddle that was new life to the rider, making him reckless of all possible consequences. Round the paddock they went at racing speed, but Cairngorm had succumbed before half the gallop

was over, and yielded to hand and rein as if he had been trained for a lady's use. A chorus of applause, tempered with respect, greeted their return to the starting-point; and not till Ernest had alighted was it perceived how his cheek, flushed one moment, had grown pale the next.

He gave Paul half-a-crown, and was turning away, when a hand was laid on his arm, and a voice of authority spoke. "You had better come in here, Mr. Archdale, and rest for a moment."

He looked round in surprise, and with a sigh of relief.

"You here, Cloud? When did you come?"

"Never mind when or why. You have done a very foolish thing, and I am here at hand. I know you are in pain."

"I am, but never mind—don't tell anybody. Charles," as that retainer, with a long face, pressed to his side, "take care nothing is said about this till I tell it myself, do you hear?"

It was as much as Charles could do to hear, for the voice of the speaker was failing, and Mowatt had only just time to put some brandy to his lips to save him from a dead faint.

And in the confusion that followed, no one observed how quietly the young groom had remounted and ridden away.

(To be continued.)



AT NIGHT.

(Translated from "Juste Ollivier.")

AT night, when work is done, 'mid shadows grey that darken
And cling about the window, where once the sun was bright,
Sweet sounds come back again to which we used to hearken,
At night !

At night, tho' we are old, and the grey shadows clinging
Presage to us that shore where there is no more light :
Sometimes there come again sweet airs of childhood's singing,
At night !

At night we two may sit in shadow, open-hearted :
Long since the time is past when Hope was all in sight !
Softly we sing the songs of happy days departed,
At night !

At night the cricket's voice sounds through the shadows dreary ;
Our songs, alas ! like his, have neither charm nor weight ;
We only rest and sing, hushed hopes and voices weary,
At night !

MRS. HEMANS.

THERE are few poets whose minds have been so truly reflected in their works as was that of Felicia Hemans. A noble and devoted mother, whose whole life was dedicated to her children, she is essentially the poetess of youth; her simple lyrics are usually our first introductions to the world of poetry; and, learned as they are at a mother's knee, as she herself probably first recited them to her own boys, they are among our earliest recollections. Although she never soars to those heights upon which genius is enthroned, a vein of pure yet romantic sentiment, an intense love of nature in its grandest and most beautiful forms, a deep religious feeling, bright, cheerful, and hopeful, are the characteristics of all she wrote. Her works are familiar in most English households, and some knowledge of the gentle woman who penned them may impart an additional charm to their perusal.

She was the daughter of a merchant named Browne, and was born in Duke Street, Liverpool, September 25th, 1794. Her father was an Irishman; her mother was descended from a distinguished Venetian family, three of the members of which had risen to the dignity of the Dogeship. Felicia Dorothea was the fifth of seven children. Almost from the cradle she was remarkable for her beauty, her precocious talents, and that exquisite sensitiveness to the visionary and fantastic which indicates the poetic temperament. Before she was seven years of age commercial reverses obliged her parents to quit Liverpool and retire to North Wales, where they took up their abode in a spacious old mansion, called Gwrych, near Abergele.

It was a solitary, romantic spot, close to the sea shore, and shut in by a chain of mountains. Here Felicia imbibed that enthusiastic love for nature which became a passion; here she passed the happiest hours of her life, and to the "green land of Wales" her heart turned as yearningly as ever did that of a Scotchman to his hills or a Swiss to his mountains.

At seven years old, an age when most girls' ideas are limited to dolls, romps, and new frocks, Felicia's delight, in the bright summers' days, was to climb up into an old apple-tree with a volume of Shakespeare in her hand, and lose herself in a world of imagination, among the Rosalinds, Imogens, and Beatrices. All that was strange, weird, and romantic had an irresistible fascination for her. Gwrych, as every respectable old mansion should, had its spectre, and on moonlight nights the child, all trembling yet eager, would creep out into the long, dark avenue, fearing, yet hoping, to

get a sight of the goblin. At other times, when she was supposed to be in bed, she would rise, dress herself, and steal out of the house down to the sea shore to listen to the moaning of the waves, and to indulge in a twilight bath. She was never sent to school; her education was purely desultory; all the world of poetry was thrown open to her; but from systematic studies, beyond French, English grammar, and the rudiments of Latin, she was wholly exempted. At seven she began to compose verses, and at fourteen a volume of these was published.

It was the time of the Peninsular war, and to a mind such as hers, filled as it was with Spanish romance, the gallant struggle of an oppressed people against a usurping tyrant was a spectacle to arouse the most ardent enthusiasm. She embodied her feelings in a long poem entitled "England and Spain," which was afterwards translated into the Spanish language. Happy had it been for her if this had been the only outcome of her enthusiasm; but soon afterwards she made the acquaintance of Captain Hemans, then in the 4th, or King's Own Regiment. To her all soldiers were heroes, and all "the pride, pomp, circumstance of glorious war" so peculiarly fascinating, that she could not read the martial odes of Campbell without crimson cheeks and flashing eyes. She was just fifteen, and beautiful as a fairy, with a complexion of extraordinary brilliancy, and showers of golden ringlets shading a countenance which answered to every sensitive emotion of her mind. Captain Hemans was immediately attracted to this "phantom of delight," and the impressionable girl, thinking she had found the hero of her dreams, fell deeply in love with him. Soon, however, he was called upon to embark for Spain, and it was hoped by her family that this affection might prove only transitory. But the very circumstance of his going to fight upon the side of her favourite nation still further deepened the impression he had made, and the fervour of which a three years' absence could not weaken.

In 1809 the family removed from Gwrych to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph. In 1811 Captain Hemans returned to Wales, and the connection was renewed with such ardour upon both sides that her friends, although they felt all those apprehensions which were thereafter to be too fully realised, finding that her happiness depended upon the union, no longer refused their consent. So Felicia and her hero were married in the following year, and took up their abode at Daventry, the Captain having been appointed Adjutant to the Northamptonshire Local Militia. At the end of a year, however, the corps was dissolved, and they, to her great joy—for during all those months she had been pining for her mountain home—had to return to Bronwylfa.

Just before the birth of her fifth child the state of Captain Hemans' health, which had been much shattered during the recent campaign, obliged him to try the climate of Italy. His wife did not

accompany him—on account of the children it was said; but there was a graver reason for her remaining beneath her mother's roof. Suffice it to say that there had been a dreary awakening from that dream of heroic love, of a perfect union of souls, and of the realisation of an idealism which her girlish fancy had conjured up. There was no formal separation; they corresponded, but they never met again. Henceforth there was a shadow upon her life; but it brought with it no bitterness, no misanthropy, for she made the best of those sources of happiness which yet remained to her: religion, books, her children, and the exercise of her talents.

Nothing could damp her eagerness for learning. She acquired an excellent knowledge of French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and German, and some acquaintance even with Latin. Her sister describes her mode of study as having been singularly desultory. She would be surrounded by books in half a dozen languages, and on all kinds of topics, and turn from one to another like a bee flying from flower to flower. Yet there was no confusion in her mind, and all the stores of her knowledge were distinctly arranged, ready to be called forth whenever they might be wanted. Her powers of memory were very extraordinary; she is said to have learned Heber's "Europe," a poem of four hundred and twenty lines, by heart in one hour and twenty minutes, although she had never even read it before. Yet she left behind her as many manuscript volumes of extracts from the books she had read as would form a small library. Her first volume of poems, entitled "Tales and Historic Scenes," in which she embodied much of the fruits of her varied reading, was published in 1819; then followed "The Sceptic," a religious poem; "Modern Greece," and a couple of prize poems, one of which, upon the subject of the meeting between Wallace and Bruce on the banks of the Carron, appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

But in 1821 she set to work upon a more ambitious task, the composition of a tragedy. It was Reginald Heber, then vicar of a Welsh parish, with whom she had recently formed a friendship that ended only with her life, who persuaded her to try its fortune upon the stage. Through him Milman interested himself to introduce it at Covent Garden, where it was accepted, and Charles Kemble and Young undertook the principal parts. It was produced in December, 1823. But "The Vespers of Palermo," as might be anticipated, depended rather upon a series of poetical passages than upon dramatic action and passion, and was quite unsuited to the stage. Mrs. Hemans and her admirers laid the failure to the account of Miss Fanny Kelly, who performed the heroine, a part decidedly unsuited to that excellent actress's powers; and in confirmation of this view, they cite its after success at Edinburgh, when Mrs. Henry Siddons sustained the rôle. At Covent Garden, notwithstanding the splendid acting of the two tragedians, it was played but one night; Murray, however, gave her two hundred pounds for the copyright.

In 1825 she, her mother, sister, and four of her boys, the other being at school, removed from Bronwylfa to Rhyllon. The two houses, however, were only a quarter of a mile apart; each was situated on an eminence of either side the river Clwyd, and the respective inhabitants could communicate with each other by means of telegraphic signals. Not nearly so pleasant and picturesque was the new abode as the old. Bronwylfa was embowered in roses and shrubs and creepers; Rhyllon was a tall, staring brick house, quite destitute of foliage. Readers of her poems will perhaps remember the "Dramatic Scene between Bronwylfa and Rhyllon," in which she has pleasantly contrasted the two buildings. But the new house was roomy and convenient, there was a charming view from the windows, and honeysuckles and roses were soon planted to trail over the staring brick. At the bottom of a green slope there was a pretty woodland dell, which became her favourite haunt on fine days. Here, seated on a grassy mound, beneath a shady beech, her boys playing about her, and surrounded by books, reading or dreaming, she passed the happiest days she had known since her marriage. Very charmingly has she described the spot in the "Hour of Romance":—

"There were thick leaves above me and around,
And low sweet sighs, like those of childhood's sleep,
Amidst their dimness, and a fitful sound
As of soft showers on water. Dark and deep
Lay the oak shadows o'er the turf, so still,
They seem'd but pictured glooms; a hidden rill
Made music, such as haunts us in a dream,
Under the fern tufts; and a tender gleam
Of soft green light, as by the glowworm shed,
Came pouring through the woven beech boughs down."

Every hour of her day was apportioned out; the early morning was devoted to the instruction of her boys, then she sat down to her desk to compose, or answer her ever-increasing correspondence, after which, with all the eagerness of a schoolgirl just relieved from her tasks, she would be away into the fields plucking the cowslips, which she loved as Chaucer did the daisies, or joining the boys in their romps and sports. In the winter evenings she was equally among their indoor amusements.

"However wearied or harassed," to quote her sister, "she might be, the claims of this joyous season (Christmas) were never remitted. The fate of poetic heroes and heroines would remain in abeyance whilst juvenile mimes and mysteries were going on at the fireside, and, for the moment, nothing seemed so important as the invention of different devices for the painted bags of bon-bons destined to adorn the Christmas-tree. Even in the midst of all her dramatic vexations she could write, *con amore*, 'The boys were very happy

yesterday evening with a plain twelfth-cake of their own, when, just as it had been despatched, and the little ones were gone to bed, there arrived a much more splendid one from the Bishop; so we are to have a *thirteenth* night this evening. Charlie lays claim to what he calls the "coronation" from the top of the above-named cake, as he says he "always has the coronations from the top of the Bishop's cakes."'''

This is a charming picture of a happy household. Her children were associated with her in every pursuit and every pleasure; to them of an evening she would read the verses she had composed during the day, and theirs was always the first tribute of applause or tears she received.

Although subject to fits of intense depression, and never wholly out of the shadow of a disappointed life, she was usually cheerful, sometimes even capable of extravagances, as when once, while out with a pleasure party, in a freak she set on fire one side of a furze-covered Welsh hill. While in these high spirits, she would frequently compose verses full of whimsicalities upon some person or event; these she called her "wildnesses;" few were ever published. But, although humorous, they were never satirical. She loved music passionately, as it exists in old national airs; she had a pleasing voice, and sang very well when she was young; the harp, naturally, from her love of Wales, was her favourite instrument, and she had a wonderful power over it. A friend describes her playing for half an hour without notes, pouring forth a torrent of wild melody, until she exclaimed, "Really, Felicia, it seems to me that there is something not quite canny in this; so, especially as it is beginning to be twilight, I shall think it prudent to take my departure." Of a nature at once lofty and simple, governed by her affections, in which lay alike her strength and her weakness, guileless, gentle, uncomplaining, self-sacrificing—such is the character drawn by those who knew her best—she created among her immediate friends a love that can only be described as enthusiastic.

In 1827 she experienced almost the greatest affliction that could have befallen her, in the death of her beloved mother, and truest and best friend. It was a blow from which she never recovered—it swept away so much of that home feeling which was the joy of her life. Her health, too, which had been delicate for years, now gave way, and, as a climax to her misfortunes, altered circumstances, brought about by the death of her sole surviving parent, obliged her to quit her beloved Wales.

Having been on a visit to some attached friends at Wavertree Lodge, near Liverpool, she was persuaded to settle in their neighbourhood, and she accordingly fixed upon a house in the village. Her parting from "the land of her childhood, her home, and her grave," was intensely sad. So beloved was she by the peasantry around, that many of them rushed forward to touch the posts of the

gate through which she had passed; and when, three years afterwards, she paid a visit to St. Asaph, they came, with tears in their eyes, to entreat her to return and make her home among them again. "Oh, that Tuesday morning!" she wrote to a friend. "I literally covered my face all the way from Bronwylfa, until the boys told me we had passed the Clwyd range of hills. Then something of the bitterness was over."

By this time her works had made her famous wherever the English language was spoken, and at Wavertree she was sought out, personally and by letter, by people from every part of England and America; her doors were besieged by visitors, the greater part of them those portentous bores who are the torments of the lives of celebrities; some came only to have a stare at a poetess, others to ask her opinions upon every conceivable topic. One visitor would request her to read aloud, that she "might carry away an impression of the sweetness of her tones;" another, hearing some clever remark fall from her lips, clapped her hands as though she had been at a play, and exclaimed, "O *do*, Mrs. Hemans, say that again, that I may put it down and remember." When, however, these people discovered that she cared nothing for balls or parties, cards or scandal, that she was not prepared to pronounce ready-made opinions upon every subject, and that she refused to be lionised, many of the most objectionable deserted her, and fell to criticising the unconvictionality of her dress, her littered apartments, &c.

It was a sad change, from Bronwylfa and Rhyllon to a very small house, one of a row close to a dusty road, from which it was separated only by a little court; her two parlours, one with a tiny book-room opening from it, were not much larger than closets; but books, flowers, her harp, and a bevy of friends, including Mary Howitt, Miss Jewsbury, Dr. Bowring, the Chorleys, and many others who frequently gathered about her hearth, relieved it of much of its prosaic dulness. In December, 1828, she wrote to Mary Howitt: "My health and spirits are decidedly improving, and I am reconciling myself to many things in my changed situation, which at first pressed upon my heart with all the weight of a Switzer's home-sickness. Among these is *the want of hills*. O this waveless horizon! how it wearies the eye accustomed to the sweeping outline of mountain scenery! I would wish that there were at least woodlands, like those so delightfully pictured in your husband's 'Chapter on Woods,' to supply their place; but it is a dull, *uninventive* nature all around here, though there must be somewhere little fairy nooks, which I hope by degrees to discover."

In the following year she paid a visit to Abbotsford, of which and of its noble master she ever after spoke in the most enthusiastic terms. "I shall not forget," she says in one of her letters, "the kindness of Sir Walter's farewell—so frank and simple and heartfelt, as he said to me, 'There are some whom we meet, and should like ever after to claim as kith and kin; and *you* are one of those.'" At Edinburgh

her society was eagerly sought in the best circles, and she became quite the lion of the Scottish capital. Her visit to Abbotsford was soon followed by one to Rydal Mount. Wordsworth had always been her favourite poet, and personal communication greatly increased the impression; he gave her a great deal of his society, read to her—his own poems, of course—walked with her, led her pony when she rode; in short, being one of his worshippers, he accepted her adoration in a very agreeable fashion. During the last four years of her life such was her admiration of his writings that she never suffered a day to elapse without reading something of them.

Wavertree did not agree with her health, and she was likewise disappointed in the advantages she had hoped from the situation in respect to her sons' education, so she soon began to contemplate another move. A visit to Dublin having given her a very favourable impression of that city, and her brother, Major Browne, being settled in Ireland, she resolved to take up her abode there. At the end of April, 1831, she quitted England, never to look upon its shores again. Her health continued to grow weaker and weaker, until the act of stooping, in consequence of a flow of blood to her head, became so painful that she could write only with pencil in a reclining position. "In my literary pursuits," she says, "I fear I shall be obliged to look out for a regular amanuensis. I sometimes retain a piece of poetry several weeks in my memory, from actual dread of writing it down."

On her way to Wicklow, for change of air, she and her maid stopped at a little inn in which there was scarlet fever. Both took the infection. From this she recovered, but it left an ague behind, and a dropsical affection which ultimately caused her death. The sad event took place on May 12, 1835. She was buried in St. Anne's Church, Dublin, which is almost close to the house in which she died.

A little before her death she composed her finest lyric, "Despondency and Aspiration," published among her posthumous works. In so brief a sketch, preferring as I have to picture the woman rather than the poetess, there has not been sufficient space to give much account of her works. In a letter written during the last year of her life she expresses regret that the constant necessity of providing money for the education of her boys had obliged her to waste her powers in mere desultory effusions. "My wish was ever to concentrate all my mental energy in the production of some more noble and complete work; something of pure and holy excellence, which might permanently take its place as the work of a British poetess. I have always, hitherto, written as if in the breathing time of storms and billows. Perhaps it may not even yet be too late to accomplish what I wish."

Alas! these aspirations were doomed never to be realised.

H. BARTON BAKER.

UNA AND THE LION.

No matter when it may have been,
 Or years ago, or but yestre'en,
 When life was in its golden spring,
 Or when its leaves were withering,
 There lived a man—I knew him then—
 No matter where, no matter when.

He was as fair, and frank, and free
 As any human soul could be.
 For every wrong he made amends ;
 Forgave all foes, improved all friends,
 And loved all women 'neath the sun,
 Yet never gave his heart to one.

Thus had he grown to manhood's prime ;
 And then he met, one fair spring time,
 When snowdrops grew a hundred deep,
 And violets just began to peep,
 As sweet a little maid as you
 Or I, or anyone e'er knew.

(Oh, if I could but paint instead !)
 Her lips were roses cherry red ;
 Her peerless brow was lily white ;
 Her eyelids were the edge of night ;
 Her eyes were moonlight, and their beam
 Filled you with love's enchanted dream.

He did not fall in love like men,
 Who first fall in, then out again ;
 He grew to love her day by day—
 Daily she stole some heart away,
 And when he'd lost quite half his heart
 He offered her the other part.

He said, " I thought, some time ago,
 My strength could match with any foe,
 But thou hast caught me in a net
 From which I cannot free me yet."
 (Indeed, it seemed he did prefer
 Being caught, for he went nearer her.)

" Nay, hear me, ere thou speak again :
 A silken cord shall join us twain ;
 Around my life one end shall be,
 The other shall be held by thee.
 Here, at thy feet, I vanquished lie,
 Fair Una thou, though Lion, I."

And somehow—how, they never knew—
 Four lips were in the place of two,
 And loving arms (the silken cords)
 Were far more eloquent than words.
 There let us leave them—happy then,
 No matter where, no matter when.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

CLARISSA'S CHOICE.

IT is growing dusk. The fire in the library, although the time is early June, is burning briskly. A greyhound, a very handsome specimen of its kind, lies sleeping on the hearthrug. There is a general air of comfort in all the surroundings, yet Mr. Dugdale—whose admiration for the country is not unrestrained, and who has come down to his neglected estate only because a long-forgotten sense of duty and a new steward have called him—is sitting with his hands before him, wondering, in a melancholy fashion, what on earth he is going to do with himself for the next month.

If, he soliloquizes, he even knew anyone in the county! Of course they will all call, the Katlins especially, but new acquaintances are such a bore. And dinners where French cooks are unknown—pah! He doesn't know a tenant on his estate, or a landlord in the district, except old Major Hyde, who, probably, would be considered unendurable in town. He wonders, vaguely, what Thistleton is doing now, and Dunmore, and all that lot; perhaps——

"A lady wishes to see you, sir," says Hickson, speaking in a respectful undertone from the doorway.

"I sincerely hope *not*, Hickson," responds his master, lazily, without turning his head. "I really couldn't, you know. I have come down here, against my will, partly to escape all that kind of thing. And having sacrificed myself, I insist on quiet."

"She says, sir——"

"I know all about it," with an impatient gesture; "just say I am ill, dying, dead, *buried*—anything, only send her away."

"I beg your pardon, sir," with an apologetic cough, "but she seemed so urgent; and I could not possibly take it upon myself to dismiss the lady in question. I believe you would not wish it, sir, if——"

"You have evidently made up your mind I shall receive her," resignedly; "there is, therefore, nothing for it but to submit: I am incapable of argument under my present depressing circumstances. Is she," desperately, "a woman or a lady, Hickson?"

"A lady, sir; *quite* the lady."

"Ah!—old or young?"

"Not old, sir; and not *too* young either."

"Neither old nor young. That generally means forty. Is she forty?"

"Dear me, no, sir—nothing of the kind. I beg pardon, sir, I merely meant to imply she was a good deal more than eighteen."

"You are invaluable, Hickson; I have always said it," with a flash of admiration. "Show her in."

"Another of the personal begging-letter sort," says Mr. Dugdale to himself, with a meek shrug, unlocking a drawer that contains money. "Better have it ready; the only thing I know of to get rid of them in a hurry." Sinking back in his chair, he puts on his most miserable air, and prepares for an ignominious defeat.

There is some slight delay; then the faint rustle of a woman's skirts, a word or two from the admirable Hickson, who then throws wide the door, and announces "Miss Carew," in his usual well-bred monotone.

Dugdale, rising from his seat with some precipitancy, makes her a deferential bow. There is extreme respect, though a good deal of irrepressible surprise, in his manner as his eyes meet hers.

She is young—about three-and-twenty—very slender, very excellently formed, of middle height, and extremely pretty. Her eyes are a clear, dark grey; her light brown hair is covered by a large hat, trimmed handsomely with feathers; a grey gown fits her rounded figure to perfection; her hands are encased in irreproachable gloves. Dugdale, as he looks at her, repents him of the "begging letter" idea, and, at the bare remembrance of it, colours slightly. So does his visitor, though from far different motives.

"I must ask you to pardon this—this intrusion," she says, in a low tone, though perfectly distinct, and full of dignity and sweetness. "I would not have come myself, but my brother is quite an invalid, suffering from an accident, and it was necessary one of us should see you. When we heard you were returning to town again so soon, it frightened us into action."

"I do not return to London for a month."

"Indeed!" with suppressed chagrin. "We were told you intended leaving to-morrow, or next day. Had I known the truth ——"

"Pray sit down," says Dugdale, courteously handing her a chair, "and let me know what I can do for you."

"I should have introduced myself," she says, with a faint smile. "My brother and I are your tenants, Mr. Dugdale, and have, I think, some slight claim on your forbearance. The place—Weston Lodge; you know it?—has been in the possession of our family for years. First, my grandfather had it from *your* grandfather; then my father had it; now my brother has it; but our lease has expired." She pauses.

"You make me feel ashamed that I know so little of my tenants, or their wishes or concerns," he says. "I know, indeed, nothing of the neighbourhood. My living so much abroad is my only excuse. But that my late steward, poor fellow, died, and that the new man insisted on my presence here for a few weeks, I should not be in this house now. Yes, you want a new lease—is that it?"

"That *is* it," with a glance of surprise at his evident indifference to, or ignorance of, all that has been going on of late. "The question is, shall we get it? The new man you speak of—Graham—has,

I think, advised you to the contrary. He wishes to take our farm, and incorporate it with the fields that lie beyond it, and let it all out at a higher value. Of course we can retain the house, but without the land it is useless to us, as my brother is fond of farming. We are willing you should raise our rent—we would gladly take all those fields I speak of, that stretch to the south of us, but, unfortunately, just now we cannot. I thought, if I were to ask you, you would perhaps reconsider your steward's advice, and let us keep our *home*."

The sweet voice trembles ever such a little, the grey eyes fall, the little delicately-gloved hand taps nervously upon the table near her.

"Have you spoken to Graham?" asks Dugdale, who, just at this moment, could have soundly rated his own zealous manager.

"No. We thought it better to see you, yourself. Will you think of it?" She raises her eyes again, and regards him earnestly, entreatingly. "To me it would not so much matter," she adds, gently, "but my brother—his heart is in the place; he has been delicate of late, and all this anxiety preys upon him, and retards his recovery. We have been good tenants; I would ask you not to dispossess us."

"I shall speak to Graham to-morrow. Pray do not disturb yourself about it; I promise you," says Mr. Dugdale, who is singularly pliable where beauty pleads, "you shall keep your home. Nobody shall dispossess you."

"How shall I thank you!" exclaims she with grateful warmth, rising. Tears of emotion shine in her dark eyes. "I hardly dared hope when I came, and now"—she pauses, and again a smile curves her lips—"I can go back to George and make him happy."

"It makes yourself happy too, I trust?"

A little shadow falls into Miss Carew's eyes. They droop.

"Thank you—yes," she answers, but there is a faint weariness, a curious pain, discernible in her tone.

She bows slightly, and turns to the door.

"Let me see you to your"—carriage he is going to say, but hesitates. She certainly looks like a woman who should have carriages at her disposal, but he remembers hearing from Graham that Weston is but a small place, and checks himself.

"Yes—I drove over," she says, quietly. And then he follows her to the hall-door steps, and sees there waiting for her a tiny phaeton, a tiny pony, and a groom holding its head. All is well appointed, and though small, perfect.

Miss Carew gives her hand to Dugdale, and steps into the phaeton; the groom springs in behind, and hands his mistress the reins; she turns, and bestows upon her landlord a smile, short, though exceedingly sweet, and in another minute, pony, tiger, lady and all have disappeared down the avenue.

He, left standing upon the gravel, watches her retreat, until distance has indeed swallowed up all traces of her, and as he looks he muses.

What a sad little face she had, but how expressive! what sweetness

in the eyes! Yes, beyond doubt it all lay in her eyes; there wasn't much to speak of in the rest of her features, except her mouth, which was charming—but there was certainly a fascination in her eyes. What did Graham mean by creating such confusion, all about a paltry few pounds a year, more or less? It was most officious of him. After all, a fellow ought to come down and see about his tenants every now and then, and consult their wishes, and see after their——

"Well, Dugdale, my boy, and how are you?" says a mellow voice behind him, and turning, he beholds *the* Major.

"Ah, Hyde, I'm uncommonly glad to see you," exclaims he, brightening, and telling the honest truth. Even Hyde, old-fashioned as he is, brings a welcome with him, being, as it were, a breath from the world of town.

"Thank you. Heard of your arrival, and just dropped down to get a look at you, and ask you to dine to-morrow night. Know how slow you must find it vegetating in the wilderness. I came through the park, and just saw Miss Carew driving away. Monstrous pretty girl I take it. Came about the lease, eh? You must give her her own way there, Dugdale, you must indeed, you know," says the kindly Major.

"I have given it," says Dugdale.

"Glad of it—glad of it. The only right thing to do. I might have known she would get no refusal from you. Beauty in distress, my boy, is all powerful, eh? You have nothing that can touch on her this season, come now," says the ancient hero, with an airy laugh that still retains all the freshness of nineteen. "I lay you anything you like you haven't seen a prettier girl this year."

"Yes I have," laughing, "but few so—so—*haunting*. I like grey eyes. Come in and dine with me, Hyde; it will be a charity, and may perhaps save me from suicide; I can't stand my own company."

"I shall be delighted," says the Major, who, next to having some one to dine with him, likes best to dine with some one. He is fond of society, and young men, and is especially fond of Dugdale.

As they lounge through the gardens enjoying a cigar before dinner, the Major grows communicative, and relates many things. Touching on the Carews, he finds himself encouraged by his host, and forthwith enlarges on the topic.

"There is only she and George," says he, "and they are quite devoted; *she* thinks there is nobody like George, and *he* thinks the same about Clarissa, and I quite agree with him."

"You seem rather *épris* there," says Dugdale, smiling. "George, as you call him, is ill, is he not?"

"Knocked himself to bits last winter, out hunting. Ribs, leg, head, all went to smash, and even now he is only slowly recovering. No doubt he will pluck up in a hurry, now this lease worry is at an end, but at one time I confess I thought he was done for. That poor child, Clarissa, was quite ill, between grief and nursing."

"Ah! That is what makes her look so sad, I suppose."

"Well, no—not altogether," mysteriously.

"Anything more?" turning sharply; "not a disappointment in love, surely? It is an impertinence even to imagine it."

"I may as well tell you all about it," says old Hyde, who adores the sound of his own voice, and is beginning to enjoy himself intensely. "All the world here knows the story, so as you are sure to hear it from some quarter, sooner or later, I shan't be breaking confidence by telling you. And you may as well hear a true version of it. You made a good guess: it *was* an unhappy love affair."

"He had bad taste, whoever he was," says Dugdale, with a faintly unpleasant ring in his tone. He has already begun to feel an interest in his lovely tenant, and when a man feels an interest in a woman, however slight, he takes it badly when he is told she, in her turn, has felt an interest in some foreign quarter.

"You know Sir Wilfred Haughton? Well, he was the man. They were engaged to be married about three years ago, everything was arranged; never was there a fellow so much in love, as *we* thought, when suddenly a cousin of Clarissa's came on the scene. A pretty girl, I am bound to say, but bad, sir, bad to the heart's core. There was something fetching about her, I suppose, because every man in the neighbourhood (except myself, Dugdale, I am proud to say) made an ass of himself about her. But she laid her plans cleverly, and never ceased till she had wiled Haughton from his allegiance, and, I verily believe, broke Clarissa's heart. She has never held up her head since. Fairly crushed she was, and all for a most unworthy object, as I cannot help thinking him."

"You put it mildly. A man who could be guilty of such an act must be termed an unmitigated blackguard," says Dugdale, calmly knocking the ash off his cigar.

"So I think. But the cream of the joke is to follow. Madam Violet having made her little game, and cajoled Haughton to the top of her bent, coolly threw him over at the last moment, and married a city man with no birth to mention, but unlimited coin."

"Serve him right," viciously. "I knew him slightly, but can't say I fancied him; weak, it seemed to me, and self-opinionated. He has been abroad for some time."

"Fit of the spleens. They say he is coming home at the end of the month, so I daresay he has got over it."

"How will Miss Carew like his being in the neighbourhood again?"

"She is very game," says the Major; "proud, you know, and that—she won't show what she really feels. Perhaps his coming will cure her effectually, and settle matters for ever."

"You mean, she will probably accept him a second time?"

"Accept him! Nonsense, sir, she will *reject* him, and that with scorn—with *scorn!*" says the Major, flushing with indignation.

A month renders the Carews very intimate with their landlord—which is hardly to be wondered at, as scarcely a day passes without his coming to Weston, avowedly to sit with George, but in reality to see Clarissa.

Now, he does not even care to conceal from himself the fact that his early admiration for her has deepened into love. Yet his attachment causes him only unhappiness, having in it all the elements of disappointment to come, Clarissa apparently being utterly indifferent to it. She is very sweet, very gentle, and treats him with all the kind familiarity of a sister, but even he cannot deceive himself into the belief that there is anything sentimental in her regard.

One evening towards the close of this month Dugdale happens to be dining at the lodge. He has dined there often of late, young Carew having taken an enormous fancy to him, being indeed almost low-spirited when he is out of his sight. All through dinner Clarissa has been singularly distraite and meditative; there is a far-off look in her clear grey eyes, her lover is quick to mark. Strolling in the garden with her, later on, through the warm, sweet, wooing July air, he suddenly breaks the long silence by saying,

"How quiet you are this evening. Has anything vexed you—disturbed you?"

"Have I betrayed myself even to you?" she says, with a smile, and a rare faint blush. "No—yes—I confess it; I *should* not be disturbed, but I *am*—in that lies my self-contempt. It makes me angry with myself to know I am annoyed, but I cannot help it. I heard to-day Sir Wilfred Haughton is coming home to-morrow!" Her voice has fallen slightly.

"Yes, I know." He has turned his face away from hers.

"Of course you have heard all that old story," she says, quite calmly, but with another blush so vivid as to bring tears to her eyes. "It seems very old now. Everyone knows it; *that* thought was very bitter to me just at first, but now I scarcely seem to mind it, and you are so good a friend I can speak to you about it. It is very disheartening, is it not," with a little constrained laugh, "that, after all one's inward lectures, one should find oneself as far from indifference as ever?"

Mistaking her meaning altogether, he winces perceptibly.

"Does his coming distress you?"

"Yes," slowly, "it distresses me; and yet I cannot say whether it makes me glad or sorry. After all, he was an old friend, before—before anything foolish occurred between us. I do not forget that."

"No doubt he has, long ere this, repented his crowning—nay, his *only* act of folly." They have got down to the wicket-gate by this time, that leads into the haggard, and he, leaning his arms upon it, continues, always with his eyes turned from hers. "What if he is coming home because the first and best love is still strong within him? It may be that he is coming to gain forgiveness."

"Oh, no, *no*!" shrinking, "I hope not. That would be terrible. I *hope* not! But," with an effort, "it is impossible."

"I think it so utterly possible, that I am almost sure of it," says Dugdale, who takes a savage pleasure in piling up his own agony. "No man, under the circumstances, would elect to come to the place again, unless with such an object."

"You frighten me," she says; and then she sighs, and brushes back her soft hair impatiently from her temples. "Would *you* act so in such a case?" she asks, presently, in a slow, dreamy tone.

Then he turns to look at her, and their eyes meet. The tender silence of coming night is all around. The faint, melodious lowing of the oxen in the far-off meadows alone breaks the stillness of the evening, that is dying with such lingering sweetness.

"I cannot answer that question," returns he, a little unsteadily; "I could not picture myself in such a case. Had I dared to love you it would have been with such a love as would have lasted to my dying day!"

Silence again. She has grown very pale, and the hand that trifles with the huge bunch of crimson roses so lately plucked, is trembling slightly. The cows are coming slowly towards them through the cool deep grass; the birds, high over their heads, are twittering drowsily a last good-night; George's voice from the verandah calls to them to return.

"You are thinking of the past?" says Dugdale, hurriedly, taking one of the roses from her.

"Yes—and of the future," replies she, in a troubled tone.

"Clarissa! you still love him?"

"How shall I tell," returns she, with a touch of passion. "I have so long brooded over my unhappy story—so often told myself I shall never again ——" She pauses abruptly. "I want to *see* him," she says, after a slight hesitation.

"Naturally," with some bitterness.

"No, you mistake. I want to see him," slowly, "because, when I do—on the *instant*—I shall know."

"Know what?" eagerly.

"My own heart," replies she, somewhat sadly.

Three days later, walking along the quiet road that leads to Weston, Clive Dugdale comes upon Clarissa and a stranger, evidently in earnest conversation. Even from the distance he can see the stranger is Sir Wilfred Haughton, and that he and Clarissa are on friendly terms. It is plainly, however, a chance encounter, because Haughton's horse is standing beside him, and even as Dugdale, with a beating heart, marks all these facts, they shake hands, and Haughton, mounting again, rides briskly away.

As Dugdale comes up with her, Clarissa turns gladly to greet him, with a bright smile. Her face is delicately flushed; there is an

unwonted brilliancy in her eyes : she is altogether a changed, and even a lovelier Clarissa than usual.

"That was Sir Wilfred?" remarks he, superfluously, regarding her curiously—jealously.

"Yes," still smiling.

"Your very first meeting with him has wrought a wonderful change in your appearance. You are pleased?"

"It was not our first meeting. Last evening he called to see us just after you had left. Had you remained to dinner as George and I wished, you would have met him."

"Should I? Thanks. The loss is not irreparable. I would rather see George and you, when alone. But you have not yet answered me; though, indeed, I scarcely need an answer when I look at you. You are brighter, more radiant, than I have ever yet seen you. You *were* pleased to see him!"

"*Very!*" emphatically. "Why not? After all, as I told you, he is an old friend; I hardly remember the time I did not know him."

"And," bending a little to look into her eyes, which meet his frankly, "you now—'*know*'?"

"Yes—now I '*know*,'" returns she, with a quiet, though very intense satisfaction.

"And you are quite happy?" There is a shade upon his face that grows deeper every second. She, having averted her eyes, fails to see it.

"Very happy," she answers, quietly. "Happier than I have been for three full years. A long time, is it not?" she asks, a little wistfully.

"Yes. I congratulate you," in a somewhat forced tone. They have reached the entrance to Weston; and he now puts out his hand to say good-bye.

"You will come in?" surprised.

"Not to-day, thank you."

"Oh, *do*," with open disappointment; "George will be so grieved if you do not."

"George must excuse me to-day; I cannot go in now," he says, almost curtly, and, raising his hat, walks determinedly away.

His heart is filled to overflowing with bitterness and sad forebodings. Is it, indeed, all over? Can his sweet dreams and happy thoughts have met with such a cruel death? Again he sees her lovely face as she turned it to greet him, flushed with content and gladness. Of course the blush had been for Haughton; already her poor wounded heart has found comfort in the very nearness of the beloved.

Pshaw! why dwell upon the inevitable, like a love-sick girl! He will throw up the whole business, leave for London in the morning, and try in absence to forget.

But when the morning comes he lingers. A faint hope—that is

almost despair, so closely does it border on it—holds him still in bondage, and compels him to stay on, and witness the final scene in this small drama.

But at the end of the second month even this faint star of hope has been drowned in the giant flood of despair. He has no longer any sustaining doubts. Day by day, meeting his rival at Weston, he notes Clarissa's kindly manner towards him, the frank warmth of her look and tones.

As for himself, her demeanour towards him has completely changed. It seems to him as though now she purposely avoids his society, and shrinks from any tête-à-tête chance may throw in his way. And yet—with an obstinacy that shocks even himself—there are moments when he cannot bring himself to believe he is altogether hateful to her. A certain softness at times, a sudden blush, a surprised glance now and again, make him persuade himself, against his common sense, she still bears for him some of her ancient friendship.

One afternoon, walking along the road to Weston, he encounters the Major coming towards him from a side walk that branches towards the west, and leads to Uplands, where dwell the Adairs. They shake hands, but, even at the moment of meeting, Dugdale becomes aware that there is an unmistakable cloud upon the Major's usually urbane brow.

"You have been to Uplands?" says Dugdale, because he has nothing else to say, and is too much the property of melancholy to care to make conversation.

"Yes," absently, "the old lady is ill again. But tell me, Clive, is it true what I have heard there, that Clarissa Carew is going to marry that fellow Haughton?"

"Have you heard it?" asks Dugdale, wincing.

"Yes—the Adairs are full of it. They say it is all settled, and that they are to be married immediately. My dear boy," says the Major, raising his hat to wipe his forehead, "it *can't* be true."

"It may be true," says Clive, gloomily. He is drawing aimless strokes with his stick upon the dusty road, and is feeling distinctly miserable.

"It *may*, sir!—what do you mean by that?" demands the Major, irascibly; "I tell you it *shan't*! It is monstrous! What! a woman like that to throw herself away upon a worthless fellow: and one who has treated her so infamously in the past! I tell you I won't hear of it. I thought Clarissa had more pride."

"And yet I do not think she is wanting in pride," says Dugdale.

"I don't know what *you* call it—but I, for one, wouldn't have believed it of her," says old Hyde, growing slightly incoherent. "I shall speak to her, and, if possible, prevent it. If I were a young man like you, Dugdale, I should make love to her myself, propose to her, and marry her under his very nose, rather than let such a sacrifice take place. But the young men of the present day," says the

Major, disgustedly, "are abominably wanting in both taste and feeling."

"I wish I could agree with you," says poor Clive, sadly.

"As no one else will interfere, I shall. Nothing shall prevent me. Her father and I were old cronies, and I shan't stay by and see his girl make such a fatal mistake without uttering a word of warning. I must now go home and scribble a letter or two for the post, and after that I shall walk up straight to Weston, and ask her what she means."

"I think I wouldn't if I were you," Dugdale ventures to say, mildly.

"But I shall, sir! Don't talk to me! Pouf! do you think the anger of the prettiest woman in Europe could turn *me* from my duty? *Never!*" says the Major, proudly.

Dugdale half smiles as they part company, and he continues his way to Weston. The hall-door, as usual, stands wide open during the glorious August weather, and, making his way to the study where young Carew generally sits, he enters, unannounced.

At the doorway he stands motionless a moment, seeing Carew in earnest conversation with Sir Wilfred Haughton. Hearing him, they both look up, and Carew's expression changes from cold disapprobation to quick distress.

"It is only Dugdale," says Haughton, with a curious gleam in his dark eyes, and a certain maddening sense of triumph in his slow deliberate tones. "No, do not go away, Dugdale; you are a welcome friend here, and I have no desire to conceal from you the reason of my presence here to day. I have come to ask Miss Carew's hand in marriage!"

Dugdale pales visibly, and his brows contract—otherwise he suppresses all outward symptoms of emotion. Then suddenly a wild determination to enter the lists himself, to declare aloud his affection for her, if only to let her see how well, though silently, she has been beloved, takes possession of him. Almost without allowing time for reflection, he turns to Carew, and says with forced composure,

"I too have come to Weston to-day, bound on the same errand. I love your sister, Carew, and would ask her to marry me. Let her choose between us."

George rises slowly. He is still weak, and finds a difficulty in sudden movements; a look of perplexity and discomfort pervades his handsome face; he trifles nervously with a paper-knife that lies beneath his hand.

"You distress me," he says at length, addressing both the suitors. "I hardly know what to say. Of course I shall inform my sister of the honour you have both done her, and—and—you must abide by her decision. But it grieves me to know that one of you—must——"

He pauses, and unconsciously, in his embarrassment, fixes his eyes upon Dugdale. Clive groans inwardly: to him it is a simple matter, the translation of that regretful look, the finishing of that broken sentence. "One of you must go to the wall—and you, Dugdale, are the man." So he reads it. The brother, knowing well the sister's feelings, had thought kindly to give him gentle warning of what is surely in store for him. That glance was an ill omen! Well, well! He throws up his head in angry defiance of cruel fate, and draws his breath a little hard.

At this moment a light and well-known step crossing the hall outside makes itself heard. It comes nearer; the door is thrown open, and Clarissa, fresh and sweet as the perfumed flowers in her hands, stands upon the threshold.

"Why, what a solemn conclave," she says, jestingly. "What long, long faces! But that the silence of the grave seems to reign, I should say you were all indulging in a battle royal. What is it, George?" laying her hand upon his shoulder with a soft caressing touch.

Taking down the hand, Carew holds it closely in his own and regards her with silent scrutiny for a full minute. Then glancing at the two men, he says, as though decided:

"My sister is here—she shall speak for herself. Clarissa, Sir Wilfred Haughton, and Clive Dugdale, wish to tell you—that they—love you; they have come this afternoon to ask your hand in marriage. It is for you to either refuse them both—or—make your choice between them."

He has spoken disjointedly, but to the purpose. Clarissa, growing white as the lilies in her trembling fingers, shrinks away from him, and letting her flowers fall, covers her face with her hands.

"Oh! why have you done this?" cries she: "it is terrible—it is cruel——"

"No—it is the wisest course," whispers he, hurriedly. "It will end at once all doubt and suspense. Believe me, it is better so—and kinder."

Looking up, she glances first at Sir Wilfred, who is evidently anxious, but perhaps a little too assured—then timidly at Dugdale, who is rather in the background, with his head bent downwards and his arms crossed upon his breast.

Feeling the intensity of her regard, he raises his head, and meets her gaze full. In his eyes there is a world of sorrowing, a passionate regret, a dumb agony, sad through its hopeless longing.

"Clarissa!" says Haughton, entreatingly, attempting to take her hand.

"No, no!" she exclaims, hastily, waving him back, her heart beating painfully. Then, "Clive, will you not speak to me?" she says, moving a step or two in his direction.

The effect is electric. At her words Dugdale starts violently, the

sadness disappears, and in its place a great gleam of joy rises and illumines his face. Yet even now he hardly dares believe in his own good fortune.

Going up to her, he imprisons her hands, and asks, in a voice so changed she scarcely knows it to be his :

"Am *I* your choice?"

"Yes," faintly.

"You *love* me, Clarissa?" almost vehemently.

"Yes," returns she, again. And then, overcome by her emotion and the situation generally, she bursts into tears: whereupon Clive, unmindful of her brother's presence, or that of his disconcerted rival, catches her in his arms; and with a sob, she lays her head upon his breast.

Leaving Weston about two hours later, he has just reached the entrance gate, when he finds himself, for the second time to-day, face to face with the valiant Major, evidently bent on slaughter.

"You see I have kept my word," says this warrior, fiercely; "I am not to be frightened, even by a frown from Venus! I have come to reason with Clarissa about this talked-of engagement."

"There is no need. *I* can tell you all about it."

"Well?" impatiently.

"It is only too true. She *is* going to be married!"

"And who, pray, told you that pretty piece of news?"

"I had it from her own lips."

"You don't say so!" exclaims the Major, staggered; then, plucking up courage again, he advances a step. "All the more cause why I should now interfere," he says, with much determination.

"I am afraid it will be too late. She and he seem very much attached to each other. I am almost sure she will not give him up."

"She will when I prove to her what a despicable scoundrel he is; and open her eyes a bit about his doings in London."

"Oh, Major! that I should live to hear you say such things!"

"Say them! I have said them a thousand times, and I shall say them again. I tell you, this man she is bent on marrying is a villain of the deepest dye!"

Dugdale laughs.

"Ah! *you* may make a joke of it, Dugdale; she is nothing to you, of course; *you* don't care about her future happiness, poor child! but *I* do, and I can't see her enter on such a wretched marriage without feeling grief."

"I don't think," says Clive, modestly, "it *will* be a wretched marriage."

"I hope you may be forgiven," ejaculates the Major, solemnly.

"Well," in an offended tone, "I shall go and fulfil my duty, and see what I can do."

"Don't put an end to the engagement, Major," exclaims Clive, in

a tone of affected dismay ; "because, if you do, you will make Clarissa, and—and *me* eternally miserable."

He has placed both his hands on old Hyde's shoulders, and is laughing lightly.

"Eh? What? You don't mean to say—bless me!—What have *you* got to do with it?"

"In me you behold the coming bridegroom," says Clive, with an air of the profoundest triumph.

The Major is struck dumb for a full minute (a most unusual occurrence with him), and then gives way to a wild rapture.

"My dear Clive—my dear, dear boy, can it be true? Oh! you young scamp, not to tell me sooner. My dear fellow, I am rejoiced." And then he fairly gives way, and falling upon the unsuspecting Dugdale, treats him to a hearty hug.

"But, Major, consider; would you wed your pearl amongst women to a 'despicable scoundrel,' a 'villain of the deepest dye'? When are you going to open her eyes to all my scandalous 'doings in London'?"

"None of your chaff," says the Major, threatening him with his stick, "but come straight home with me, and let us drink the future Mrs. Dugdale's health in a bumper of champagne."



HAUNTED.

When candle-flames burn blue,
Between the night and the morning,
I know that it is you,
My love, that was so true
And that I killed with scorning.

The watch dogs howl and bay;
I pale, and leave off smiling.
Only the other day
I held your heart in play,
Intent upon beguiling.

A little while ago
I wrung your soul with sighing;
Or brought a sudden glow
Into your cheek by low,
Soft answers, in replying.

My life was all disguise,
A mask of feints and fancies;
I used to lift my eyes,
And take you by surprise
With smiles and upward glances.

And now, where'er I go,
Your sad ghost follows after;
And blue the flame burns low,
And doors creak to and fro,
And silent grows the laughter.

G. B. STUART.

P

ANDRÉ, THE BEGGAR BOY.

BY F. E. M. NOTLEY.

"FOR the love of charity, monsieur——"

It was the voice of a child by the wayside, begging. I had not seen him till my stout staff nearly touched the little ragged shoes that stood rooted in mud and moisture among the wheel ruts.

"For the love of charity, and the holy Virgin, monsieur, give me a sou. My father is blind."

He spoke in the patois of the Ardennes, and for a moment my ear scarcely caught the meaning of the half French, half Latin words of that quaint old dialect.

I answered him in French. "And even if your father be blind, my boy, why should you beg? Surely, it is better to work than to be a beggar."

"I have the Mayor's permission to beg for my father, and Monsieur le Curé's also," said the boy, proudly.

"You may have the whole world's leave if you can get it, but I never give to beggars."

The boy looked into my face as I spoke, and met my scornful gaze with the frankest amazement that ever shone out of a child's eyes; then suddenly dropping his eyes to the ground, I saw the lids quiver, and tears fall slowly. He brushed them away with a little brown hand, and steadying his voice, spoke out again bravely.

"You are an English gentleman; is it wrong in England to beg?"

"It is disgraceful in my country to beg. An honest, good boy would rather work his fingers to the bone than disgrace himself by begging idly by the roadside day after day."

"Disgraceful to beg—to beg for one's father!" returned the boy, in a tone of wonder. And this time his eyes, without tears, met mine in sad bewilderment. "Ah! sir, yours must be a hard country if they reckon it wicked there to ask alms."

"We do not think it wicked to ask alms in a proper way, but to beg every day is idle and vicious."

I was turning away from him, when his clasped hands held towards me, and the deep, painful flush that crimsoned his face at my words, called me back with renewed curiosity.

"You do not understand, good gentleman. I am not idle—I am not vicious—indeed I am not; ask our good curate if I am. And I do not beg every day. I ask permission to beg once a fortnight. I come out by the roadside every other Thursday, good sir, and then I return to my work."

His explanation only puzzled me the more, and I felt truly that, however great my horror might be of begging, there was some new

element mixed with it here not to be found among the rags and wretchedness of English beggary.

"Ah! André, lad, is that you?" said a cheery voice, suddenly. "Here are your two sous, my bonnie boy, and right welcome you are to them too."

I looked round and beheld the queerest little figure imaginable. Short, thick-set, stout, strong, and ruddy, dressed in bright woollen petticoats, bright blue stockings, a snowy cap, of a shape no English milliner could conceive, and carrying on her back a basket taller by half a yard than herself—a most comical basket, that stretched from her head nearly to her heels; a basket that would have extinguished her completely had she only put it on the wrong way—a way in which it was my good fortune to behold it put on, a few days afterwards, at Liège, in the only street quarrel which I ever saw in Belgium. Two women were wrangling with very fierce voices, and gestures that would have set Cheapside in a roar, when, all of a sudden, one of them, sily unbuckling her basket, popped it over her antagonist's head, and completely extinguished her. Restored instantly to good-humour, she ran away laughing, leaving her enemy like a human candle suddenly put out, standing in blank darkness, bewildered and silenced. On being extricated from her wicker extinguisher, amid roars of laughter, she departed without uttering a word, and with a very comical look of discomfiture on her shrewish face.

"Truly an excellent method," said I to myself, "for utterly routing and demolishing a scold."

"A good boy, monsieur," remarked the little market-woman; "a very good boy is our André; he walks all the way from Dinant, and that's a long five leagues, to beg for his blind father."

"But why beg?" said I, half angry at the woman's praise of such a deed. "Is there no work to be found for a sturdy boy in this country?"

"Not much, monsieur; but André does his best. He works for the bargemen on the river, and earns sometimes six sous a day. So he loses always a day's work when he begs for his father. And that's hard; for since his mother's death the child has had no home, and his little earnings keep him but roughly."

Leaning her long basket against a poplar tree, the woman, with a motherly look upon her kind face, bade him take a few vegetables from it for his father; and then, with a curtsy, strangely stiffened by the wicker armour on her back, she wished me good-day, and departed.

I was not much the wiser for her talk, and being of a curious disposition, I was not content to remain in ignorance of the strange anomaly that made begging a virtue. As yet, I had begrudged the boy even a sou, and as I looked at his wonderfully patient face, so full of a trust and faith I could scarcely fathom, my heart smote me.

"Surely there is something here beyond my understanding?" I said; so I put two sous into his hand; and I did this because the boy's belief that I should give him alms was so strong that I saw the idea of a refusal had never entered his mind.

It is a sad thing to destroy faith—to discourage the natural human trust in kindness that springs spontaneously in young souls, as yet unsharpened and unsoiled by contact with great cities, their cunning, disbelief, and cruelty. I could not do it in André's case; I left him his faith in human charity at a cost to myself of a penny, and I felt none the poorer as I put my purse back in my pocket.

The child looked at the money, and then at me, and smiled. His smile was full of trust and confidence.

"I knew you were a kind gentleman," he said.

Glancing on the two sous in his small palm, I smiled also. "Those are not common coppers," whispered my thoughts; "some angel blessed them, surely. They help to-day to strengthen that great human faith in human good which stands like a tower of defence against the mocker, the atheist, and the slayer of souls." A few moments ago, and I was vexed that I heard the boy's praises; now I was vexed that I heard my own. Still, ignorant though I was, I felt certain I had done a kindness, and not a wrong, in transgressing my principles, so I would not disclaim the goodness with which he crowned me.

"Where does your father live, André? I should like to go and see him."

A sparkle of pleasure leapt into his dark eyes like a sunbeam. "Is monsieur really so good? My father lives at the village of Saint-Eglise; it is a good league from this. It lies among the hills, quite in the Forest of the Ardennes."

Let it be observed, in passing, that until you get to Saint-Hubert, in the centre of the Belgian Ardennes, the peasantry will never acknowledge that the actual ground on which you stand is in the forest.

"And how shall I find him, André, when I get to the village?"

"Ask for blind Gustave, monsieur, and anyone will show you the cottage where he lodges. I wish I could walk with you, monsieur; but I am going now to the farms and châteaux, and I shall not get to Saint-Eglise till sunset."

"Then you do not stay here all day?" I asked, surprised.

"Oh, no, monsieur. I never stay after I have gained six sous. That pays one week's lodging for my father; and a kind lady, at the big château yonder, always gives me the six sous for the other week; I am going there now, sir. I always pay the rent, you see, once a fortnight. My father is a very honest man, everyone knows that; they trust him willingly till my begging-day comes round. Good-morning, kind gentleman."

Shouldering his large wallet, and then bowing to me like a prince, he ran off, breaking into a whistle as he climbed the hill.

"There are degrees, then, even in beggary," said I, philosophizing as I walked. "This is the very prince of beggars—an aristocrat who makes his calling noble, and prides himself on his respectability; who boasts of honesty and credit, and punctuality in payments; verily a beggar who might figure in our friend *Punch*, and raise a laugh.

"And yet, no," said I, drawing back my thoughts from their travels in Fleet Street and the Strand. "The sturdy London beggar who bragged of his honour and honesty would be an impostor and liar; but this child of the forest, who listens so simply while he hears his own praises sounded for begging, is made of other stuff. There is a system, too, in his mendicancy which tickles my fancy. He stands by the roadside once a fortnight, and pays his father's debts."

I walked on and on, through scenery full of wonders and dreams. Here, a great rugged hill, bare and stony; there, a huge rock standing alone, glistening in naked strength and solitude; then, suddenly, a precipice, so abrupt and terrible, that the mind recoiled from its very thought, and the eye, in relief, turned to the little heath bells, swinging on their tiny stalks, amid a scented breeze and music of summer flies.

Ha! a monstrous butterfly, in black and gold! Long pointed rays of brightest amber, bordered by vandyked lace—a veritable beauty, a "joy for ever," if a pin were only through his slender body, and he lay "alone in his glory" in this pasteboard box of mine. There! he lights upon the juniper and sucks the berry—a gin-drinker! I have no pity for him now; this golden pin shall kill him without mercy. I have him! No, I have only a bunch of juniper-berries, and a prickle in my thumb. And the flashing rays are laughing in the sun, while Prince Amber sucks his "peckie"* from another bush.

He leads me on with glistening impudence, tempting my feet to the very edge of danger, as I skirt the precipice; and then he goes down, down, down, gleaming and flashing like a winged jem, as he descends with taunting ease into the gorge, while I, with greedy eyes and covetous hands, and golden lance poised ready, stand staring, a baffled slayer of the innocent.

I put the empty box into my pocket, and ask of the winds and heather the way to Saint-Eglise.

Oh, what a dell is this before my enchanted sight! All the stately trees and soft green herbage, all the little flowers and sparkling streams have rushed from off the hills and hidden themselves down here. And they shine, and laugh, and glisten, and glow, and shake their leaves in ecstasy, till every sunbeam dances in the joy of its own light, and I, silent in wondering happiness, scarce see the brightness of the valley because of thankful tears. And what an atmosphere is this to live in! It is not air, it is all sunlight, clear and

* Peckie is the name given in the Ardennes to a sort of gin made there.

radiant as the sky itself, without even a shadow of the earth's heaviness to mar a single beam. Every breath drawn in is a pleasure; and my worldly trouble seems so light, that heart and brain fling off care and laugh at it, as it goes floating away on the bright winds.

Saint-Eglise lies on a sunny slope of the forest, with the great hills all around it, not vapoury and indistinct, as in Ireland, but standing out with wonderful clearness in the bright ambient air.

As I ran down the steep street, I met Monsieur le Curé face to face.

I took off my hat. "Will monsieur have the goodness to direct a stranger to the house of blind Gustave?"

"Sir, I will go with you," said the priest, with great politeness, "and show you the way."

We walked on side by side. "I am interested in the man," said I, "because to-day, on the Dinant road, I met his son, and I was grieved to see the boy begging."

"Grieved!" cried the priest. "He is a good boy, and begs nobly for his father."

I turned towards him with a resigned air; here was another respectable member of society endowing beggary with a patent of nobility, and I could only bow and smile acquiescence. Nevertheless, my countenance expressed bewilderment.

"You are an Englishman," said the priest; "you have a poor-law in your country: we have none; therefore, when some poor forlorn creature falls into misery, the mayor and the priest of his village give him permission to beg, not every day, but once a week, or more seldom, according to the urgency of the case."

Here was a sudden enlightenment; and I craved earnestly for further intelligence.

"And have the poor no help save this licensed begging? Surely such a task falls hard on the aged, the sick, and the high-minded." I hesitated at the last word.

"It may sound strange to you," returned the priest, "but the poor here count it no shame to wear the mendicant's badge. I have read that in England it is a painful degradation to accept your parish relief, or to enter your hospitals." He meant workhouse, or union, but I did not correct him. "In our parishes here," he continued, "a piece of land, called the Commune, belongs to the poor. Each family, according to its number, has its portion allotted to them to cultivate. In the same way, every October, when the wood is cut in the forest, we give to each family its share. It is seldom that this fuel is not sufficient for the winter."

"There is so much of the forest uncultivated, that this system acts well in the Ardennes, but it would, of course, be impossible elsewhere."

"Blind Gustave, for whom you ask," resumed the curate, "is also a cripple. His cottage was burnt down two years ago; his cow,

housed in the kitchen, as is often the case here, was burnt to death; it was in his efforts to save the poor animal that he was so sadly scorched as to be blinded and lamed."

"You tell me a sorrowful story," said I.

"But that is not all. Three days after the fire his wife died from fright, and grief, and exposure to cold. Save a chair or two, nothing in his cottage was saved from the flames; and his eldest son, on the very day of his mother's funeral, was drawn as a conscript. He is now in garrison at Antwerp."

"Truly, if there be any excuses for begging, here are plenty," I answered. "I wish I had made my four sous a franc," I said to myself, sadly.

"Poor Gustave lay long in bed in a neighbour's house. On the night of the fire he had lain down to rest a hale man of forty; he rose from his sick bed blind, helpless, and aged. Can you wonder the Mayor and I gave him liberty to ask for alms?"

"Since you have no poor-laws, and the man could no longer work, you could ill refuse him the poor liberty to beg," I answered.

The priest's pale face flushed slightly. "I see you think your own customs the best," he said; "but ours are kinder. When you have seen Gustave, you shall judge."

We entered the cottage as he spoke. The blind man sat by the window, twisting a few willows into a rough basket. He looked up on hearing us approach.

"Take a chair, Monsieur le Curé," he said. "You have a stranger with you, sir."

"Ah, Gustave, you know it is not the step of an Ardennais you hear. It is a gentleman who saw your son this morning."

The man's sightless face now turned towards me eagerly. "The best of boys, sir, is André—a dear, good child. He goes begging for me, sir, because he knows it would be hard indeed for me to travel from house to house, blind and crippled as I am. Still, I would have done it, and my sister's little girl offered to lead me by the hand, but André took all on himself. And he is proud too, Monsieur le Curé, as you know; for the good Mayor gave him leave to beg every Thursday, but when he had tried it for two weeks, and found I had a little surplus over, he took the money to you, and begged you to give it to the other poor. Since then, sir,"—turning again to me—"he has only asked for alms once a fortnight, and I always have enough, thank God."

"Your misfortunes, Gustave, are known at all the châteaux and farms around," said the priest; "and everyone has something ready for André when he comes."

"For his sake, sir," said the blind man; "they all love André. How can they help it? He was but nine years old when this misfortune came on me, and he has kept his helpless father ever since." Tears, not in the sightless eyes, trembled in the man's

voice, and seizing his work hurriedly he began to weave again with awkward fingers.

"You would not like to go away into a hospital crowded with strangers, Gustave?" asked the Curé.

"The good God forbid, sir. I was born and married in this village. I shall die here, and be buried with my wife. But before that day comes I shall play with André's children, and tell them often what a good son he was."

"In that hospital I speak of, Gustave, the old people are shut up by themselves; they cannot speak to the little children—not even their own—or play with them."

An expression of pain and wonder grew into the man's scarred face, then it broke into a smile. "Ah, Monsieur le Curé, you are joking with me. In the whole world there can be no such cruel and barbarous place for the poor."*

The Curé turned and looked at me. I was ashamed, and held my peace.

"And have you told the gentleman how André found work at Dinant by the river-side, and keeps himself that he may not burden me? He is quite rich, he says, as he never takes a sou from the few pence he begs for me."

"That is quite true," said the Curé, turning to me; "the child begs for his father, never for himself; and when he has gained the little sum that keeps Gustave for the coming fortnight, he asks for no more."

I would have said "Are you sure of that?" but the blind man's sightless face was turned towards me, listening eagerly to these praises of his son, and I was not cynic enough to utter my insulting doubt.

"André walks the whole way from Dinant," continued the Curé, "on his begging-day, besides going his rounds from house to house. Some Thursdays he comes here worn out with fatigue."

"That is a sad truth," said the blind man, as he dropped his rough basket on the ground. "Oh, sir! shall I never be able to gain enough to save my dear boy from this hard work?" Here he stopped, and caught the basket up eagerly. "Look, sir, it is better, is it not? André says I am growing quite skilful. He got five sous for the last basket he took to Dinant."

The Curé, glancing at my face, smiled and shook his head. Then I guessed that those five sous came from little André's hard earnings.

I took the mis-shapen basket in my hand. "And since you have improved so much," said I, "this basket must be worth more than the one André sold. Finish it for me, and let Monsieur le Curé name its price. If André got five sous for his, this must certainly be worth ten. Why, this is double the basket the other was."

* Nevertheless, the hospitals for the aged poor in France and Belgium have very strict rules.

"Do you think so?" said the man; and his scarred face was radiant.

I held a ten-sou piece towards the Curé, but he put my hand back.

"The basket is a good basket, Gustave," he remarked; "but it is not worth the stranger's ten sous. You must not hope to get more than five yet awhile."

He changed my half-franc, and gave me back five sous. The coppers vexed me as I put them into my pocket. And I had thought myself so generous that morning when I gave two sous to André.

Blind Gustave chinked his sous with a great clatter, and put them on the window-seat before him. "André will see them there directly he comes in," he said. "And where can I send the basket for the gentleman?" he added, eagerly; "I can finish it in an hour if I work."

"Send it to me, Gustave," returned the Curé; "your little niece can bring it. Adieu, Gustave; it is nearly vesper time, I must leave you."

I went with the good priest to his house, and when he opened a little cupboard to give me a glass of common wine, I saw upon the shelf a rough, ill-made basket.

"So it never went to Dinant?" I exclaimed.

"No; it was a present to me from little André," he said. "Poor Gustave's work is quite unsaleable."

"Ah! why did you not let me give a miserable ten-sou piece for the basket I have bought?" I cried.

"Would you tax the child so heavily?" returned the priest. "Had you given that, Gustave would hope for the same sum for every basket André gives away, and the poor boy would not disappoint his father."

I was dumb before the rebuke, seeing my error.

"Wait," continued the Curé, "till André gets a better post; by the time he is fifteen the basket will be worth a franc."

That time came and went long ago; but the mis-shapen basket at five sous exists still in my cabinet of rarities, as a memento of little André, the Beggar Boy of the Ardennes.



SMOKING A WITCH.

A Donegal Legend.

BY LETITIA M'CLINTOCK.

"I 'M 'feared to go wi' you the night, Tam."
 "'Feared? Is it 'feared you are? It's the fine, brave man you are, for certain."

These last words, spoken in a tone of withering scorn, were addressed to Tom Doolan by his comrade and neighbour, Jack Devenny.

The two men were about to launch their boat, and row across the Lough to cut osiers on the island; and Tom, whose face was pale, and whose step tottered, hung back when the time came to take his place and begin to handle his oar.

It was a sunny August day. The mountains, covered with heather, glowed a warm crimson in the sunshine; while the cornfields were like sheets of gold, and Tamney Lough was a mirror to reflect unbrokenly the blue sky and sailing clouds.

Far away beyond Mulroy, an inlet of the Atlantic, stretched other mountains, tier upon tier, the nearest hills purple, the more distant ones like smoke-coloured phantoms against the sky. Even the acres on acres of bog that lay between the cornfields had a beauty of their own. Everything was silent. There was no whirr and bleat of snipe—no cry of gull or plover. Smoke rose from the chimneys of the little mud cabins scattered here and there over the country; but there were no voices to be heard; only in the village of Tamney there was some slight traffic and stir.

"'Feared is it you are, Tam?" repeated Devenny, as he shoved off from the land.

"Ay—the witch! the witch!" faltered the other, paler than before.

On a sloping field just above the Lough, was a cabin no better than those in the village, and Tom raised his timid eyes towards it while he whispered: "The witch! the witch!"

Betty Moriarty had lived there as long as the oldest inhabitant could remember. Paddy Steven, who had been born in the year 1708, declared that she had seemed an old woman when he was a boy; and now, in 1800, she looked younger than he.

There were other circumstances that made Betty's neighbours regard her with awe.

She had no ostensible means of support, yet had she plenty of everything in her cottage:—a pile of the driest turf which no one had seen cut, or drawn home from the bog; quantities of milk and butter that she had not bought at the shop; clothes that, like the

garments of the children of Israel, "waxed not old." All this seemed to be, not merely comfort, but wealth and splendour in the eyes of the simple people. Many a woman, who happened to have a small churning, firmly believed Betty to have drawn away the butter from her churn, but was afraid to quarrel with her, and, therefore, spoke of her loss in guarded whispers.

The only person who had had courage to reproach the witch was Tom Doolan, whom she had now reduced to an abject state of fear.

Some months before the beginning of our story Betty had kissed Tom's youngest boy without saying "God bless you for a bonnie wean," and the child had pined away ever since. Father Dan, indeed, had confirmed the suspicions of the parents by certifying that the little fellow was suffering from the baneful influence of an evil eye.

No coppers of Betty's ever found their way into the priest's purse; no exhortations of his induced her to appear at either chapel or station.

When Tom Doolan had openly charged her with having bewitched his child, and had driven her down the village street, not, indeed, lifting his own hand to her, but permitting his boys to pelt her with mud and pebbles, she had turned to shake her stick at him, and to threaten vengeance, muttering curses, "not loud but deep."

"She said she'd waste me to skin an' bone: she said her eye'd be on me sleeping an' waking," faltered the trembling man.

"Whisht, wi' your foolitchness," reproved his companion.

Little Eileen Devenny, too young at six years old to be afraid of the witch, came to old Betty's door at that moment, and peeped in.

She saw the old woman pour water into a large tub that stood in the middle of the room, and place a wooden dish in it; and, full of interest and curiosity, she walked into the cabin.

"There, wean," said Betty, "you watch thon tub, an' tell me what the wee dish does, an' I'll gie you a piece wi' a taste o' butter an' sugar on it."

The witch crouched by the hearth, with her pointed chin supported on her skinny, clawlike hands. Her face was thin and furrowed; her nose meagre and hooked; her eyes cruel and cunning; and the long teeth that her parted lips disclosed while she muttered incantations looked cruel too.

"What is it you're sayin', Betty?" asked the child, surprised at the old woman's continued low murmurings.

"Watch the wee dish, child, an' tell me what you see."

"Oh, Betty, Betty, the dish is going round an' round in the tub!"

"Is it, wean? Faix, that'll do bravely."

More muttering.

"What's the dish doing now, Eileen, mavourneen?"

"Oh—oh—oh! Musha, musha! it's spinning round as fast as

anything ! It's turning over ! There ! It's full o' water—it's gone to the bottom o' the tub !”

“That's right,” and Betty rubbed her skinny claws together, and grinned with pleasure. “Thon's your daddy's boat that's sunk in Tamney Lough,” she chuckled, “an' thon thief o' the world, thon rascal Tom Doolan's in her, an' he'll be drowned. Curse him ! he set his boys to pelt me wi' mud an' stanes. Let him drown an' burn,” she continued in a lower tone,

“‘Nae candle at his head,
Nae priest beside his bed,
Nae winding-sheet, nae hearse,
Nae coffin for his corse.’”

When little Eileen caught these dreadful words she became frightened, and ran to the door. The sky was as clear as ever, except directly above the osier island on Tamney Lough, where a heavy cloud seemed to hang ; while white-crested waves, driven by the wind, washed over the upturned boat, which dashed, rudderless, up and down upon the rocky point of the island.

It was a strange sight : the furious storm was confined to that one spot, while on all other sides the landscape lay glowing in August sunshine.

“My daddy's boat's lost ! He'll be drowned !” said the child, returning to Betty's side, and beginning to cry.

“Hurrah ! Hurrah !” cried the witch,

“‘Nae candle at his head,
Nae priest beside his bed.’”

The awfulness of the partial storm had struck others besides little Eileen. Three or four people in the village street had seen the Lough become lashed into fury in a moment, and had also watched the boat being overturned ; and, as quickly as possible, another boat was launched, and the bodies of Doolan and Devenny were sought for.

Jack Devenny was brought to shore, and after restoratives had been used, he recovered consciousness.

“Where's Tam ?” were the first words he said.

“We canna get him,” was the reply, and Tom's widow wrung her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

“They'll no get him,” chuckled Betty from her post of observation at her cabin door on the hill overhanging Tamney Lough :

“‘Nae winding-sheet, nae hearse,
Nae coffin for his corse.’”

One or two of the searchers overheard her, and they shook their fists in her face with impotent rage.

All that day and all the next day they sought, but Tom Doolan's body could not be found. It was, indeed, *never* found, and the

lake was regarded with superstitious horror for long years afterwards.

But to return to the witch. Little Eileen was an intelligent child, and she told her father how Betty had bade her watch the dish in the tub of water, while she had been muttering low to herself; how it had turned round and round, sinking at last to the bottom; and how Betty had exclaimed, "Ay, that's yer father's boat, an' Tom Doolan, the thief an' villain, 'ill be drowned!"

Devenny was not quite so unmanned by superstitious dread as his neighbours; besides which, he was sorry for the loss of his comrade, and he determined that his death should be avenged. Feeling his way very cautiously, he found a couple of fitting accomplices among the kneeling crowd in the chapel-yard next Sunday, and he settled with them what was to be the witch's fate.

One night, when all was silent in the village of Tamney, the three men stole out of Devenny's cottage, and coasted the reedy edge of the Lough, in whose gloomy depths poor Doolan was lying. No candle, or priest, or wake, or burial had the poor fellow had, and they shuddered as they passed his unknown grave, crossing themselves piously, and thinking of his wandering soul. The water-hens were disturbed by their stealthy tread, and a flock of plover flew overhead, uttering their wild, almost human cries. On they went, cautiously mounting the hill, and pausing several times to listen before they reached the witch's door. The reason for this caution was that, Donegal being in a disturbed state, parties of yeomanry scoured the country every night, and apprehended anybody whom they found abroad after nine o'clock. All lights were to be extinguished at that hour, so Betty's dip candle had long been out, and no glimmer appeared at her single tiny window.

"Where's the kale-stalk?" asked one of the men. They climbed upon the roof, stopped up the chimney, and then putting the cabbage-stalk into the keyhole, blew clouds of sulphur through it into the cabin.

"We'll smoke her the way his reverence smoked the bees," said they, stationing themselves at the keyhole in turn; and they did not desist from their labour until dawn appeared.

So they smothered the witch: she was cold and dead next day when the door was opened; and as there were no coroners' inquests in those days, her being found dead excited but little attention. Indeed, at the time of the Union, Ireland was in so disorganised a state, that the death of one old woman in her bed was but little noticed. The manner of her end was known to her old neighbours around Tamney Lough; but it was never spoken of except in whispers, though years afterwards parents pointed to the ruined wallsteads upon the hillside, and told their little children what the witch's fate had been. The writer was told the story by an old man whose mother had lived in Tamney at the time.

On our venturing to doubt the existence of witches at the present day, he declared there was then (August, 1877), to his certain knowledge, a witch living close to his own farm; and he pointed out a pretty, fair-haired woman, mother of a large family, who has only one cow, yet sells quantities of butter.

She has a slight figure, as well as blue eyes and flaxen hair, and we thought her a pleasant sight as she tripped along the Tamney road to market, followed by her little crowd of whiteheaded children. The uninitiated, at least, look at her with pleasure; but the Roman Catholics cross themselves furtively when they meet her, and the old and ignorant among her Protestant neighbours regard her with evident fear and dislike.

"Do you mean to say that she is able to draw the butter away from your churn?" we asked our old friend the farmer.

"Troth is she, miss; there's nae divilment too hard or too bad for thae witch-women. Sure she turns hersel' into a hare every summer nicht, an' milks the cows in the fields. I ha' started a big hare from amang my ain cows in this very field, an' as sure as I'm a livin' sinner, it made for yon hole in the back o' Norah's house."

"Do you really think Norah's the hare?"

"Think it, miss? God bless your innocent wit! I'm *sure* of it. It wad be a charity to the country-side to shoot her wi' a bit o' siller—in troth, if I was as souple as I used to be, I'd do it mysel'."

"Does it take long to turn her back into a woman?"

"Is it long, miss? Not a minute. She just says a wheen words that the bad man learned her, an' she's in her ain shape again."

"Is Norah the only witch in the country?"

"Na, na; there's her mother at Coolback, and her grandmother at Milford; all the breed o' them Taylors was witches; but there's warlocks too: I mind to ha' seen ane o' them when I was a wee chiel the height o' my stick."

"Oh, please tell me all about it!"

I was sketching in the old farmer's own meadow, behind the witch's cottage, and he stood near me, leaning on his stick; and as I washed in the delicate or gorgeous tints of my picture, I listened to his weird tale.

"It was in the County Derry," he began, "that all my people was born and bred. The Derry gentlemen was great riders, an' fond of hunting, and it was aye a spree for the wee boys to follow the hunt. I could run nigh hand as fast as a hound mysel' in them days. One day (I mind it as weel as if it was yesterday) we couldna start a hare awa, an' the gentlemen was all out o' patience, when we come upon an ould man sitting cobbling shoes, an' herding cows, in a wild kind o' place below the Birdstown mountains.

"'Wad your honours wish me to start a hare for yez?' says the ould man, risin' to his feet.

“‘Ay, surely,’ says the gentlemen, ‘for we canna find a hare this day, at all at all.’

“‘Weel,’ says the ould man, ‘if I find a hare in thon wood,’ says he, ‘will yez gie me five shillin’ when the run is over?’

“‘Ay, surely, good man, you’ll get the five shillin’,” says they.

“Wi’ that the old fellow down wi’ his awl, and the brogue he was cobbling, an’ into a clump o’ bushes that was about a hundred yards off the knowe where we found him.

“He wasna three minutes in the wood till a big hare ran out an’ the hounds after it, an’ awa over the country. Weel, we had the best run o’ that season, but the hounds couldna get up wi’ the hare ava; and at last it brung them back to the knowe fornenst the wood, and ran in amang the trees, just where it ran out in the morning. The hounds lost it there, an’ the old fellow stepped out o’ the wood an’ up to the huntsman, ‘An’ whar’s my five shillin’?’ says he. Weel, he got the money, an’ then he smiled up in the gentleman’s face, an’ ‘Wasn’t that weel run for an old man?’ says he. Now, my lady, that’s as true as gospel: I ha’ seen quare things in my time. Will I tell you about the black pig that I found in the potato-field?”

“Please do; I should like to hear it.”

These wild fancies suited the surrounding landscape. Witchcraft seemed to have a fitting home among the mountain lakes and rugged hills of Donegal; and fairyland might still exist in the dells and slopes, amid bowers of eglantine where Titania could have slept.

The farmer’s stories had, for the moment, all the effect of truth: he had left “boastful youth” very far behind him, and we rejoiced to have made his acquaintance in his “narrative old age.”

“My father,” he began, “was yard-man to his honour Sir William Francis, of Castle Francis, in the County Derry, when one summer evening him and me seen a wee skip o’ a black pig running along the potato ridges in his honour’s home park. I was a brave runner, an’ I after the little pig. I caught it, an’ held it till my father came up, and, between us, we got it into the yard at the Castle, and shut it into a sty to itself. His honour, Sir William, made enquiries far an’ wide to find out if anyone had lost a wee black pig; in troth, I willna just say, for fear I’d tell a lie, but I do think he had it printed in the newspaper; but naebody wad own the pig, and deil a ane wad tak’ a present o’t.

“So there it stopped, an’ it ate an’ ate till it was that heavy it couldna get in an’ out at the door o’ the sty, an’ a bed had to be made for’t in the cart-shed.

“It got on to be November, an’ the butcher came to look at the master’s pigs.

“‘Come, Gallagher, an’ look at the pig that dropped frae the clouds,’ says Sir William.

“Those was his honour’s very words, an’ my father an’ the men in the yard looked at each other when they heerd him.

" 'Thon's the best pig o' them all,' says Gallagher ; ' he's seven hundredweight if he's a pound.'

" ' Well, you can kill him the first thing to-morrow morning,' says Sir William, turning awa, careless like, frae the door o' the cart-shed.

" ' We didna wish to kill him because o' the quare way he come to the place ; but the master's bidding had to be done ; so we got a big vat o' boiling water ready, for we knowed the carcage wad be heavy ; and then we went to the cart-shed. Was the water boiled when we went to the cart-shed ? I'll no just say, for fear I'd tell a lie, but, anyway, I'm sure my father had the fire made to boil it.

" ' Weel, your ladyship, when we went to kill the pig, there was nae pig in the shed, an' there was nae pig to be seen anywhere, though we searched the country far an' wide.

" ' His honour said we *be* to ha' left the door open, but I put it to you, how could a pig weighing seven hundredweight ha' disappeared, so that nae track o' him could be found ? an' wha could ha' stole a pig o' thon size ? "

" ' What do you think really happened ? "

" ' I think the pig heered the talk about killing him, an' he went awa."

" ' But what was he ? Was he a fairy, a warlock, or what ? "

" ' If I know, my lady ! but this I do know—all luck left Castle Francis from that day. His honour lost a lawsuit he was engaged in, and his big bull that was brung over frae England, an' was worth twa hundred pound, choked himsel' wi' a turnip. Troth, it's a dangerous thing to despise luck that comes to your door ! "



THE MAGIC OF A FACE.

I WAS coming home to marry my cousin Alice. For two years I had been engaged to her, and, with the short exception of two months, had been parted from her for that time. My work as a civil engineer took me to San Domingo, and there I had waited from month to month, expecting to finish the duties assigned me, and hoping to reap my hard-earned reward.

It came at last. I could return, well-off in health and pocket, to claim my love, whose constancy had been a matter of great joy and consolation to me.

Our childhood had been passed together, and our schooldays were linked to each other by many a surreptitiously copied exercise or example, many a divided luncheon. Advancing years only increased our intimacy. She grew into a tall, slight, fair-haired girl, with pale blue eyes, a delicate skin, almost too white in its fairness, with a tremulous mouth, and clear-cut, quivering nostrils; I, into a young fellow six feet high, strong and vigorous, and with an over-abundant supply of physical energy.

It was during one of my vacations, when I was about twenty-three, that the idea developed in my mind to make Alice Arden my wife. One afternoon in the early autumn, as we stood together in the midst of dying nature, with all its brilliant flashes of colour surrounding us, I asked her to marry me. She said, quite simply and calmly:

"Yes, Basil; and I will try to be a very good wife."

I remember, as she stood, she held a branch of pink maple leaves, shot with deeper crimson, between her eyes and the dying sun; they cast a lovely rosy reflection over cheek and brow, and made her beautiful indeed.

Two months from that time I accepted work in San Domingo, leaving Alice betrothed to me, and content to wait for my return. This, unfortunately, was put off from time to time; and thus it was two years from that autumn evening, when we had stood side by side and plighted our troth, before I could return to claim her. In the meantime Alice's letters had come as regularly as was possible.

The last year had been marked by a great event in Alice's life. She had been abroad with some friends, spending eight months in travelling through the old world, mostly in Italy. I had had but one letter from her since her return, and that a short and rather sad one. I fancied she was feeling the reaction from the past months

of excitement; after so long a time of change and variety, the quiet of a New England village was likely to be depressing, especially as Alice possessed few resources within herself. She neither played nor sang, painted nor wrote, nor was she much of a reader. Yet for all such things she showed an appreciation that betokened a vein in her character not yet explored.

The last rays of a November sun were bathing all the country far and near, as I walked up the village street to the large stone house, surrounded by trees, on the top of the hill, where Alice and her widowed mother lived with her father's unmarried brother, Judge Arden. How little changed everything was! I had been gone so long, and met with such varied experience, it did not seem possible that life could drone on anywhere in the same humdrum fashion for twenty-four months as it had done here. Alas! I was to find the change where it would strike deepest, and be hardest to bear. I walked up the avenue shaded by maple and birch trees, all crimson and gold in the twilight; but, strange to say, I met no one. Usually at this time I would find Alice seated in her favourite place, half-way between the house and the gate, her golden head catching reflections from the dying sunbeams, or passing to and fro on the grass, followed by all the dogs. Now there was no one to be seen. The chairs were set back stiffly against the closed blinds of the parlour windows, no dogs flew out to greet me, no sweet face welcomed me from door or window. What did it portend?

Impatiently I sprang up the steps, turned the handle, but could not enter; the door was locked. Judge Arden's door locked! here was change indeed! I rang the bell impetuously; after a time the door was opened by a maid, a stranger to me.

"Where is Miss Alice?" was my first abrupt question. "Will you tell her that I am here, waiting to see her."

"Miss Alice sees no one, sir," was the servant's reply. "I can take in your name to Mrs. Arden."

Good heavens! Alice sees no one; and I, Basil Grey, the spoiled child of the family, must send in my name to Mrs. Arden! I laughed out in my amazement.

"Tell Mrs. Arden," I said, "that Basil Grey has come."

The girl withdrew quietly, and almost immediately returned.

"Mrs. Arden begs you will walk into the library, sir. Not that way, sir," as I was turning to the old room, "the library is the other side the hall."

The library of Arden House looking to the east instead of the west. Change upon change!

The maid opened the door; I saw at a glance the room was empty. A low fire smouldered on the hearth, the window curtains were unlooped, and hung down in careless folds; on the various tables, where once would have bloomed flowers and hanging vines now lay only a few books, piled together hastily; a general sense of

gloom and depression hung about the place, and I, as I stood alone, with all the sunlight fading out about me, felt unconsciously the same gloom and depression creeping up and steeping all my senses in its lethargy.

The door opened ; I started forward, Mrs. Arden met me. Here at least was a reality ; she had not changed. I went up to her hurriedly.

"Dear Mrs. Arden," I cried, "I am come home. But what does all this mean ? Where is Alice ?"

Then I looked at her, and behold, she too wore the same subtle change in face and figure ; no light of pleasure gladdened her eyes, or caused her lips to smile in welcome to me. Her pretty brown hair was all streaked with grey, her face was pale, her manner dejected.

"I am glad you have come, Basil," she said. "Not that I think you can do much good, but it's pleasant to see you again. Alice is resting, but I daresay she will see you."

"Daresay she will see me !" I echoed. "Why, of course she will. I have come home to marry her !"

"Ah, Basil ! I doubt if Alice even remembers you or her promise now."

"What do you mean ?" I cried. "Alice not remember me ! Is she ill ? Has she lost her reason ? For pity's sake tell me the meaning of all this !"

"Poor Basil," she murmured pityingly ; "of course you cannot know. No, she is not ill, Basil ; not really ill, but she is so changed, and we do not know why. She walks about as one in a dream ; she will sit for hours without moving, not answering even when spoken to, taking no interest in any person or thing about her."

"How long has this been ?" I asked.

"Six months now ; we noticed it first on her return from Europe."

Yes, I remembered ; the one letter I had from her during the past six months was sad and depressed.

"Hush ! I hear her coming," said Mrs. Arden, holding up a warning finger.

The door was pushed slowly open, and Alice came into the room. My heart leapt up at sight of her. Would not my love's heart speak out on seeing me ?

She came towards us slowly, her dark draperies making no noise as she walked, her hands crossed lightly before her. I noticed how transparent they looked against her dress. Her beautiful golden hair was drawn from her forehead, and twisted into one great coil on her head ; her always white skin was now perfectly colourless, while her blue eyes had a strained, tired look in them, as of one who had neither rested nor slept for many nights.

She looked at us very calmly, and then passed on in her noiseless walk to the window looking south, pulled back the curtain, and stood

gazing out. The last faint glimmer of sun came in and rested lovingly on her golden head.

"Alice!" I said, going up to her, "do you not know me? I am Basil."

"Basil!" she answered, turning her distant blue eyes upon me. "Are you cousin Basil? I am glad to see you. You have been away a very long time, dear Basil, and sometimes I have wanted you." Then she put out her hand; I took it in mine.

"Surely you must know, my darling, why I have come home. Do not you remember two years ago how you promised to be my wife? I have come back to claim you, Alice."

A slight shade, a shadow of sorrow, passed over her sweet face.

"Poor Basil," she said, "not to know that I cannot be anyone's wife."

I drew back quickly, dropping her hand; she did not seem to heed me, but stood looking out upon the gathering gloom, seemingly unconscious of the shock her words had caused.

"What does she mean?" I asked, hurriedly turning to Mrs. Arden. She only shook her head in reply, and her eyes were full of tears.

Later in the evening, as I sat with the judge over the glowing wood fire, he told me how, since Alice's return from abroad, this horrible change had grown upon her. It came by degrees. At first she was bright and happy, though always reticent in regard to her journey or what she had seen. After a few weeks she grew restless and moody, then again unnaturally gay. At one time she fancied having the old library made into her bedroom; the judge, only too glad to gratify her, consented. This accounted for the change that had so surprised me. One by one she gave up her daily duties, neglected her flowers and dogs, shunned her poor people, went nowhere, gave up all society, and denied herself to anyone that might call. She would sit for hours with clasped hands, gazing out over the fields and trees, to where, some miles away, the ocean washed the coast; but neither question nor reproach could rouse her from her reverie.

"Have you had no advice?" I asked. "Surely something can be done. Take her away, give her change of scene; her life is too dull here!"

"Alas! my dear Basil, all that has been tried, but to no avail. We have had the best medical advice from Boston; even the great brain authority, Dr. H., of New York, has seen her; but they can none of them help her. We have taken her away, but change only aggravates the trouble. The doctors all agree that she is suffering from some mental malady, yet none of them, with all their wisdom, can reach it. Our poor Alice is dying before our very eyes, and neither love nor skill can prevent it."

My poor girl! how hard it seemed, that upon her for whom there seemed so much in life, should come this awful blight.

The next day she sent for me to come to her room. She was sitting by the window when I entered, and I noticed casually as I passed that the farther window, which opened upon a covered verandah or outside passage, was closed and protected by heavy inside shutters. The sunlight lay across the floor in a broad straight band; in its midst was Alice, her hands folded listlessly upon her lap. I went to her, and taking one little hand into mine, said—

"You sent for me, Alice; do you want me?"

"Did I send for you, Basil? No, I don't think I want anything. Perhaps, though, you can tell me something that will amuse me. Where have you been, that you stayed away so long?"

Her sweet, tired eyes looked up at me appealingly, and I, conquering as best I could the horror that was creeping over me, told her of my life in San Domingo. For a few moments she listened eagerly, with somewhat of her old look of interest; but this soon faded, and I saw that I was talking to deaf ears. I released her hand.

"You are tired, Alice: some other time we will talk again."

She smiled vaguely for answer. I left her, more perplexed and sad at heart than ever. The days passed on, I could see no change for the better in Alice. Her time was passed in listless idleness; even the slight interest my coming had roused in her was soon over, and all my attempts to rouse her were fruitless. After a few weeks, I, too, ceased to try, and found myself accepting the position of affairs as inevitable, and growing as subdued and dejected as those about me.

One evening, or rather night, for it was close upon one o'clock, I sat by the library fire reading; gradually the book lost interest for me, and I fell asleep, to be awakened immediately by a slight noise at the door. I turned my head—there, to my surprise, I saw Alice. She was standing by the south window, clad in a long, soft, white robe; her beautiful hair, unbound, fell upon her shoulders and to her waist, in straight, heavy masses.

"Alice!" I exclaimed, starting up, "what are you doing here?"

She did not answer me, and though she turned her head and gazed at me, her eyes wore no look of recognition. She stood for a few moments, her eyes fixed on the darkness without, holding back with her pale hand the heavy draperies that covered the window. Then, with a little murmuring sigh, she dropped them, and walked slowly and hesitatingly towards the door. I rose and followed her as silently as possible. She crossed the hall to the door of the old library, now her bedroom; this she pushed open noiselessly, and I cautiously stepped behind her into the room. The curtains were closely drawn over the window in which she had sat the morning after my arrival, while, to my exceeding surprise, the heavy wooden shutters that guarded the other were thrown back, and through an opening in the covered passage the moonlight, faint and pale, shone in. Still gliding on before me, she passed down the passage to a

small door half hidden by a heavy ivy vine. As she neared this, she turned abruptly, and looked about her with pale, vacant eye. Then taking from her girdle a key, she fitted it into the lock, opened the door, and entered.

The room was large, one half being portioned off by a heavy damask curtain. Alice pushed this aside, and we stepped into a flood of silvery light. The large window opposite us was bare of blind or shade; through this the moonlight streamed in gorgeous splendour. At first, my eyes, accustomed to the obscurity of the long corridors, were dazzled by this sudden flood of light, and I could distinguish nothing; but, by degrees, I found myself noting the peculiar appearance of the room.

The walls were roughly finished in plaster, and ungraced by picture or ornament, but hanging over them in great profusion were vines of every description, from the wild clematis, with its feathery bud and blossom, to the pale green smilax, whose tender leaves gained a new freshness in the moonlight. Flowers blossomed everywhere, the warm air was heavy with their perfume. How all these retained their life and colouring in the rough early winter that had set in, was a mystery to me, and Alice's secret.

At the farther end of the apartment, near the window, was a raised dais covered with a crimson rug. Upon this was set up an easel. The picture that rested upon it was hidden from sight by a curtain of crimson silk; a low artist's chair and table, set with brushes and palette, stood near. Alice crossed the room quickly, took up the palette and brushes, and throwing back the curtain, began to work with eager haste. At first my astonishment was so great I could not move, for I knew that never in her life had Alice held pencil or brush; indeed, her total lack of artistic taste or interest had been a matter of much discussion between us. Yet now she handled both as if certain of her own power, and as of one long accustomed to the work.

I approached noiselessly until I stood where I could look upon her picture. It was not a large one: a square of perhaps twenty inches, a pale grey background, upon which a bunch of damask roses were coming to life beneath her hand. The work was marvelously done. Each petal lay back soft and creamy, the green leaves curling around them tenderly; yet something about them startled and shocked me. What it was I could not say, yet, each time I looked, the feeling of repugnance waxed stronger. Suddenly it came to me. In the heart of each rose lurked a human face, not sufficiently defined to be at once visible, but growing upon you by degrees with a fascination awful in its grotesqueness. And it was always the same face, and always the face of a man, repeated over and over, sometimes but a shadow, often nothing but a faint outline. You could no more doubt its existence than you could that to-morrow's sun would chase away the gloom of night. Alice painted on, silently and

swiftly. She gave no sign of life save the quick moving to and fro of her hand, and the coming and going of her uneven breath.

The moonlight flooding the room lighted up as strange a picture as was ever seen. The pale girl in her white drapery, over which strayed the unloosed braids of her golden hair, working with feverish energy upon her weird, unearthly roses; the vine-hung walls shimmering in the silver light; and I, the one conscious watcher.

Hour after hour must have passed; already the moonlight was paling and fading. Alice was at work upon her last flower; she bent eagerly forward in the imperfect light, a slight smile parted her lips; the last rose was completed, and from it too looked the same shadowy face the other roses held. She drew back for a moment, then hastily, as if in triumph, signed her work. I, following with my eyes the letters as she formed them, read, not her own familiar signature in slight pointed letters, but the bold characters of a man's hand forming the name, "Carlo Berdisi."

As she traced the last letter, the moon disappeared completely; only the cool light of the coming dawn filled the room. With a sigh either of fatigue or content, Alice rose from her seat, drew the curtain over the picture, and, as silently as she had entered, left the room, locking the door carefully, and shutting and barring the window that gave access to the corridor.

Not until I reached the library and saw the dead fire, and the grey morning shadows creeping out of the corners, did I realise in how strange a scene I had taken part. Alice's presence and occupation had so absorbed me I had taken no heed of the flight of time. The next morning I sought her in her room. She was sitting in her usual place in the window, full in the light of the sun. She smiled a quiet welcome as I drew my chair to hers and took her hand, scanning unconsciously her fingers for some trace of the night's work; but her little hands were white and flawless as they rested indolently on her dark gown.

"Alice, dear," I said, "you have never told me about your winter in Italy. Was it all you pictured it, or did it disappoint you?"

I fancied her hand closed more quickly on mine, but her answer, so quietly indifferent, belied the idea.

"Oh, yes, Basil, I liked it. You know I never was much given to dreams, so I could not very well be disappointed."

"And did you visit all those wonderful art galleries? How much there is there to call forth one's love of such things."

"No doubt, Basil, dear, to anyone but me; but you know very well I have no taste for such matters. Why, I don't even know one colour from another, and am ignorant of the most commonly familiar names of artists and pictures."

Yet I had seen her, only a few hours before, bending breathlessly over her canvas, and working with the ardour of one sure of success.

"Alice!" I said, suddenly, "to where does that window lead, and why is it closed in that way?"

"Why, Basil," she answered, "you must remember: it opens to the old outside corridor where we used to play, but it has been barred and locked a long time now. Uncle Arden thought the room unsafe without this protection."

"And is it never opened, Alice? neither night nor day?"

"No," she said, quietly, "never that I know of."

Yet I had seen her, but a few hours back, pass in and out of the window, and with her own hands close and bar the shutters! Was she mad, or was I?

The days grew into weeks, but brought no change in Alice. I had tried several times, but always unsuccessfully, to find her again at her night work; she had either abandoned it, or else I was unfortunate in my efforts.

As the weeks lengthened into months, I began to hope that Alice was returning to her natural state. At times she seemed more her old self, walked and rode with me, and once even, as we stood in the fast-gathering twilight of a December day, she put her hand caressingly to my shoulder, saying in her own old sweet voice:

"Dear Basil, you will not tire of me, surely?"

For answer I folded her in my arms, and she lay so for a time seemingly content.

But, alas! as the spring days came on with their promise of an early summer, Alice sank back into a worse phase of her strange malady; she was restless and moody, impatient in her answers, and growing even angry over trifles.

One night in April—I remember the date, the fifteenth—I was sitting alone in the library, smoking my last cigar; the clock had already struck midnight, and I was preparing to go to my room, when I heard the same stealthy opening of the door that had disturbed me there months before. It was Alice who entered; Alice, in the same trailing white gown, with her golden hair hanging about her. She went through the same pantomime, drawing back the curtain of the south window, while she gazed out silently. As she let it fall she murmured softly:

"Very soon, Maestro mio; it is nearly finished now!"

I followed her as before. She led me through the long passage to the ivy-covered door. When we came within the strange studio, I felt a change; the vines hung withered on the walls, only a few flowers were grouped in one large bowl, and they already showed the hand of death upon them.

The painting upon her easel was covered with the same crimson curtain; Alice threw it back impatiently, and at once set to work. I stole behind her, but started back on seeing what her brain and fingers were producing. This too was a small-sized canvas, with the same softly-tinted background; from it looked the head and face of

a man, regular in outline, glorious in beauty, the completion of the shadowed faces that the roses half revealed.

From the fine olive brow the hair swept back in dead, lustreless black; the straight Grecian nose was a model; the rounded, full-coloured lips might have belonged to Paolo when he wooed Francesca; and the eyes, "large, asking eyes," of deepest brown, were those of entreaty and command combined.

Whose was this face? What man could have come into this quiet life, with his foreign beauty, and so imbue her with himself, that her very nature and attributes became changed beneath his influence? Where had she met him? Was he a reality, or was he but a figment of an overstrung, imaginative brain?

A thousand like questions crowded my mind as I watched Alice's quickly-moving fingers. To me it seemed she held the brush tenderly, lingering lovingly over the smallest detail. To my eyes the picture was already finished; not so to hers. She worked on until daylight was growing visible in the east, even then putting down her brush with a sigh. She held her head upon her hand, gazing lovingly at the beautiful face. Even to me it seemed the pictured eyes gave back the glance, the pictured mouth moved in some soft, southern love word.

Suddenly she stooped and laid her lips against his. Did they return the sweet pressure, that the crimson should so flood cheek and brow, and lose itself in the golden locks above?

"To-morrow," she murmured; "addio, addio!"

That night I spent in thinking how best to unravel this mystery, and I decided that the next day I would tell Alice of my following her, and accuse her of keeping a secret from me.

But to-morrow brought us word that Alice was not well enough to leave her room. She grew rapidly worse; in three days her life was despaired of, and we waited with intense longing for one ray of consciousness to be given her before she passed into "the silent land."

She lay upon her bed, her blue eyes widely open, yet seeing nothing about her, her golden hair flung out upon the white bed covering, and all the time a sweet, happy smile upon her lips, but a smile that had naught to do with me, and in which we held no part.

In vain I called her by all endearing names; her eyes never turned towards me, her lips never responded.

It was a week from the time when I had last followed Alice to her studio. That night I shared the watch with the nurse; there was nothing really to do, so I let the woman lie down, promising to call her if any change came.

The night wore on, hour after hour, but Alice never moved or spoke; her breath came fitfully through her parted lips, her eyes gazed out unseeingly. I watched her as she lay there, and all the old memories rushed quick and fast upon me, crushing out the

dreadful present, giving me back my love, as she had stood that autumn day holding between her eyes and the sunlight the branch of pink-flecked maple leaves. I buried my face in my hands, and the grief that was pressing so sorely on my heart had its way for a time. When I raised my head the room was full of the soft grey light of dawn; surprised at the flight of time, I looked at Alice and started at once to my feet.

She was sitting straight in the bed, her hair swept back from her forehead, an exalted, entranced expression on her face. I sprang towards her.

"Alice! Alice!" I cried, "do you know me? I am Basil, your Basil. Oh, my darling, for mercy's sake give me one word!"

Useless, worse than useless pleading; she neither heard nor heeded.

Suddenly the sun rose, flooding the room with warm, rosy light.

With one wild, glad cry, one long-drawn call of "Carlo!" Alice threw out her hands towards the glowing east; for one moment the sun, streaming over her face, brought back the crimson flush to her cheek and brow; then she fell back upon the pillows, a heavy, breathless weight.

My cry of agony brought the family to her bedside; they found me on my knees beside her, holding her fair head upon my breast, and pressing passionate kisses upon her smiling, silent lips.

"Is she dead?" I asked beseechingly.

"Alas! yes, dear Basil."

But I would not believe it, not that day nor the night which followed, although my poor darling lay so white and still, and showed no sign of life. Yet I could not think her dead.

They robbed her for her burial, and laid her on her couch with flowers all about her. Still to me she was not dead, and I pleaded so hard, I entreated so violently, they dared not take her from me and put her in the cold, dark earth. Two days passed so; on the third night I determined to visit her studio, where last I had watched her busy hands.

Remembering how she used to draw me after her, I rose and tried to fancy that she led the way. Through her now silent chamber I went, unbarring the heavy shutters her delicate fingers had last closed. The long corridor was full of April moonlight as I walked down it, and Alice really seemed to flit before me in her flowing robe.

I pushed open the ivy-covered door, and found myself within her temple. Everything was as she had left it, only the dust lay upon all things like a heavy grey pall. The vines were but skeletons, the flowers in the bowl crumbled at a touch, the brightness of the crimson curtain that hid from sight her work was dimmed by the same grey shade: her brushes and palette lay as she had put them down, the colour stiffened on them, her chair pushed back, a tiny cambric handkerchief on the floor as she had dropped it.

All spoke of her, yet she was dead! I raised the silken curtain reverently; there shone forth in the moonlight the same dark, beautiful face over which my Alice had hung in loving work. To my eyes the full crimson lips, to which she had pressed her innocent ones, curled in a smile of triumph, while the eyes had lost all look save that of command.

I dropped the curtain; my rival flaunted his victory too openly before my face.

On Alice's artist table I found a small flat book. I opened it; the parting leaves gave back to me a dry, sweet odour, as of pages long closed upon a flower pressed in its first freshness. I turned the leaf; a bunch of pale purple anemone, still bright in colour, greeted my eyes. Beneath, in Alice's writing, I read:

"La Campagna, Roma. To-day, for the first time, I have seen my master. From his hand I had these flowers."

Still further on:

"Carlo Berdisi—my fate! Why should I so struggle against destiny?"

Then, under a date of a month later, a printed notice cut from an Italian paper, giving a short account of the success achieved by Carlo Berdisi in gaining the prize given by the Academy for the best modern painting; adding a comment on his being a promising young painter in the Roman world, high up in court favour, and of rising reputation. Beneath, in Alice's writing:

"Thou hast triumphed! Alas, for me it is indeed addio!"

There was but one more entry, and that of but a week gone by; in fact, dated on that very fifteenth of April when I had last seen Alice at her work.

"Nearly a year since Carlo left me. My work, too, is nearly finished. Oh, my master, I have suffered! be appeased. It is your spirit that has worked through the poor instrument of my feeble body. I leave your beautiful face, over which I have poured out my life, as a future glory to you, Carlo! Maestro mio, come to me: am I not worthy?"

Here the writing ceased; and, with this cry in her heart, Alice had waited for her summons. I glanced back to the printed paper, and noticed more carefully the date, the 22nd of April, 1860; then I remembered it was the 22nd of April, 1861, that Alice had gone from me. One year exactly to the very date between the two events. Was not her prayer answered? Had not his spirit come to her? If not, why that rapt look of happiness, that smile of content that lighted her face for the week before she died? Why, above all, that glad, triumphant cry of "Carlo," that died on the air with her last breath?

Tenderly I laid down the book; it was as though my darling's heart had been opened before me.

As I retraced my steps, my heart full of Alice's double life, there

came to my memory how once, while in San Domingo, I had read with great interest how a certain Dr. d'Aumal had restored a young woman from what seemed to all about her death. Alice had apparently been dead three days, and yet, save that there was no pulse, no heart-throb, no breath, she lay as one asleep; all that is most painful in death was not with her. Could it be possible that what seemed death to us might, after all, be but a deep, breathless sleep?

In a fever of excitement I flew to the judge and Mrs. Arden, and begged them to send for this Dr. d'Aumal. Mrs. Arden shook her head. Alice was dead; she knew it; why strive to think otherwise? God knew best. Then she buried her head to hide her tears.

The judge thought otherwise.

"How can I find this man, Basil?"

Luckily I had kept the paper; a few moments' search brought it to light.

"Dr. Henri d'Aumal," I read. "No. 100, Madison Avenue, New York."

In less than an hour a telegram of great urgency had been sent; by midnight we had the answer:

"Will be with you to-morrow afternoon.—H. d'A."

The next day I passed in Alice's room, by Alice's side, and on my knees I cried to God to spare her life, and send to me any other sorrow He might choose.

Do you think such prayers are not heard and answered?

By four o'clock the noise of carriage-wheels on the drive told me the doctor had arrived. In a few moments the judge entered, ushering before him a small, dark man, with a large head, clear black eyes, and a finely-chiselled mouth. He crossed the room quickly, bowing to me as he approached.

"Is this the young lady?" he asked in a well-bred voice, which, in spite of his strong foreign accent, inspired confidence at once.

He took Alice's hand in his, bending the slight fingers backward and forward with tender care, raised the lids of her eyes, put his ear to her heart, all in a slow, impassive manner almost aggravating to witness. Suddenly, as he passed his hand over her golden hair and pale brow, an expression of triumph came over his face. He turned and spoke in a more nervous tone.

"There is one chance in ten thousand, one experiment alone that can save—or kill. Will you have it?"

We answered "Yes."

"Will you ask my nephew to attend me? He has my case with him."

The judge went to fetch him. Meantime the doctor gave me my instructions.

"You will sit one side of Miss Arden, my nephew the other. You will each hold one of her hands, and you will tell me immediately if you feel ever so slight a pulse-throb. What I shall do no

other doctor in this country has done—I but once before. I shall take my scalpel and slightly raise the skin here,” laying his hand on Alice’s left temple; “if, when I prick the artery, the blood comes out red, she lives, provided we can stop the bleeding and give her sufficient nourishment. Do you understand?”

I answered “Yes.”

We then drew her couch close to the window, and I took my station, with my fingers on Alice’s right hand. At that moment the judge entered, followed by the doctor’s nephew. I rose to meet him, when, as the light struck full on his face—was I awake or dreaming, mad or sane? surely this was Alice’s picture-face—this was Carlo Berdisi!

Before I had time to speak, he caught sight of Alice and started back.

“Is it possible?” he cried out. “Oh, anima mia, is it thus I find thee!”

He would have thrown himself on the bed beside her but for the doctor’s peremptory resistance. Then followed a word or two between them in Italian, and then he took his place the other side of Alice, and we waited for the doctor’s signal.

Think what a situation.

On one side the man who loved unsuccessfully; on the other, the man who loved and was loved. Between us, one fair girl, the arbitrator of our lives!

Very skilfully Dr. d’Aumal set about his work. With fingers almost as tender as mine, he inserted the shining steel blade of the little scalpel, slightly raised the thin skin from her temple, and, scarcely breathing, prepared to probe the vein. It was a moment of intense excitement; the sun flooded the room, and lay in wasteful splendour upon the perfectly motionless figure, over which hung, in breathless suspense, three eager men.

My finger rested on her slight wrist, my every nerve was strained to its utmost to feel the first faint throb of life, while still with jealous eyes I watched my rival on the other side, lest he should be the first to say,

“She lives!”

A moment—then, in answer to the sharp point of the knife, two drops of bright red blood ran out and trickled down her cheek. Even as they started I held up my finger to the doctor; he took her hand in his, touched her pulse, smiled, then turning quickly, began to pour the blood that now flowed freely, while at the same time I poured some brandy into her partially-opened mouth.

Gradually the features relaxed, the eyelids fluttered slightly, a few beads of moisture started on her brow; she smiled, turned her head wearily, and then fell into a deep sleep.

“That is well,” cried the doctor; “now she will live. In a few hours she will wake, and, save for a little languor, she will be none the worse for her dream of death.”

I laid my hand upon the young Italian's shoulder, and motioned him out of the room.

As we stood in the long passage, now half-full of shadows, I said :

"You are Carlo Berdisi?"

"I am—and you?"

"Basil Grey, Miss Arden's cousin and affianced husband. Will you tell me where you knew her?"

Then, with his handsome face full before me, and in his wooing southern voice, he explained how in Rome he had met her, been attracted by her calm, shy beauty, noticed her seeming indifference to all art, tried to initiate her into its beauties, until he found himself growing more and more fond of the pure New England girl; and as he noticed the singular power he began to possess over her, he used it to rouse an equal passion in her heart. He told her of his love one day as he gave her some wild flower—the pressed anemone in her journal; she, while answering with her eyes, drew back, and kept him from her by her gentle pride. There was something about her he could never overcome. Was it, I dared ask myself, my love that wrapped her about and protected her?

And so one day, when failing to awaken any more absolute response to his pleadings than the half-frightened, half-longing look in her eyes, he left her, saying bitterly,

"I can love you no longer. You are cold, you are proud, but my spirit shall so possess you, that what you do shall not be of yourself but of me. Until you can suffer through art, as an artist does, you are not worthy of my love!"

Then he had kissed passionately the folds of her dress, and she had cried out as he left her, "Carlo! Carlo!" But he would not listen, and soon he heard she had gone to her far-away home.

Only a week ago he had come to join his uncle, to aid him in his scientific researches.

As he concluded, the sun shot out suddenly a last flash of crimson that lit up into glory his wonderfully beautiful face.

Ah, what chance had I against beauty and fervour such as his?

Then I spoke.

"Mr. Berdisi, it would seem one of us is to do the other a sad injury, and yet unwittingly. We both love the same woman. I am generous, but not enough so to withdraw entirely in your favour. Let it be thus: we will both watch by her bedside until her waking; to whichever one she turns, to him shall be the victory."

We entered Alice's room together; she still slept; the curtains had been drawn, and the candles lighted. We took our places, one on either side her couch, where her first conscious glance would rest upon us.

The hours crept on. Dr. d'Aumal and the judge passed in and out, and still she slept. The grey dawn once more crept out from the folds of night, little by little the east reddened; Alice stirred

slightly, she sighed, moved her head upon the pillow, sighed again, opened her eyes and gazed vaguely about her.

Slowly, very slowly, her face betokened returning consciousness; her eyes, from wandering about the room, came back to us; she glanced first at Carlo, then at me, then back again to him; my heart stood still; then once more her blue eyes turned towards me, she smiled, put out her little hand, and in her own sweet voice of two years ago, said—

“Basil, am I ill? What are you doing here, my darling?”

Even as she asked the question she fell once more into a sound, refreshing sleep. And so was my prayer answered.

And now, perhaps, comes the strangest feature of this strange malady.

After Alice's recovery she retained no memory of anything that had happened to her in the last year. When I spoke to her of her art, she looked at me in wonderment. When I showed her her studio, her paintings, and her journal, she was completely astounded and incredulous. She did not even recall the name of Carlo Berdisi, and looked with perfect indifference upon his picture face; and though I endeavoured in every way to catch some indication of a returning memory, I was always unsuccessful.

She was perfectly well and strong, loved me devotedly, but all her recollections dated back two years, and no effort of mine could recall to her mind any of her foreign experience.

Dr. d'Aumal, to whom I told the entire story, said: “To you this seems a very great mystery; to me it is written in letters of gold, that ‘he who runs may read.’ My nephew, Carlo, simply dominated her through his superior will, and through his art. What she loved in him was, not himself, but his work. She has an extremely nervous temperament, highly strung and imaginative, and she met some one like her in nature, only stronger, who appealed to her unborn artistic faculties, and over these he swayed his sceptre. Her love for him, and her love for you, were two utterly different emotions, though bearing the same name; yet see how in returning health she turned towards you, and her art love had died, never to be even remembered or regretted.

“Such is the triumph of grosser emotions over the purely æsthetic.

“Marry her, my dear boy; she will be everything to you; and my poor Carlo has returned to Rome, a wiser if a sadder man.”

This was the doctor's explanation, and as I could give no better one, I accepted it, and took his advice.

Nowhere is to be found to-day, I think, a happier home than ours, well hidden among the New Hampshire hills, or a more blooming wife and children than meet me on my return from work at evening.

A. DE G. S.

UNDER THE STARS.

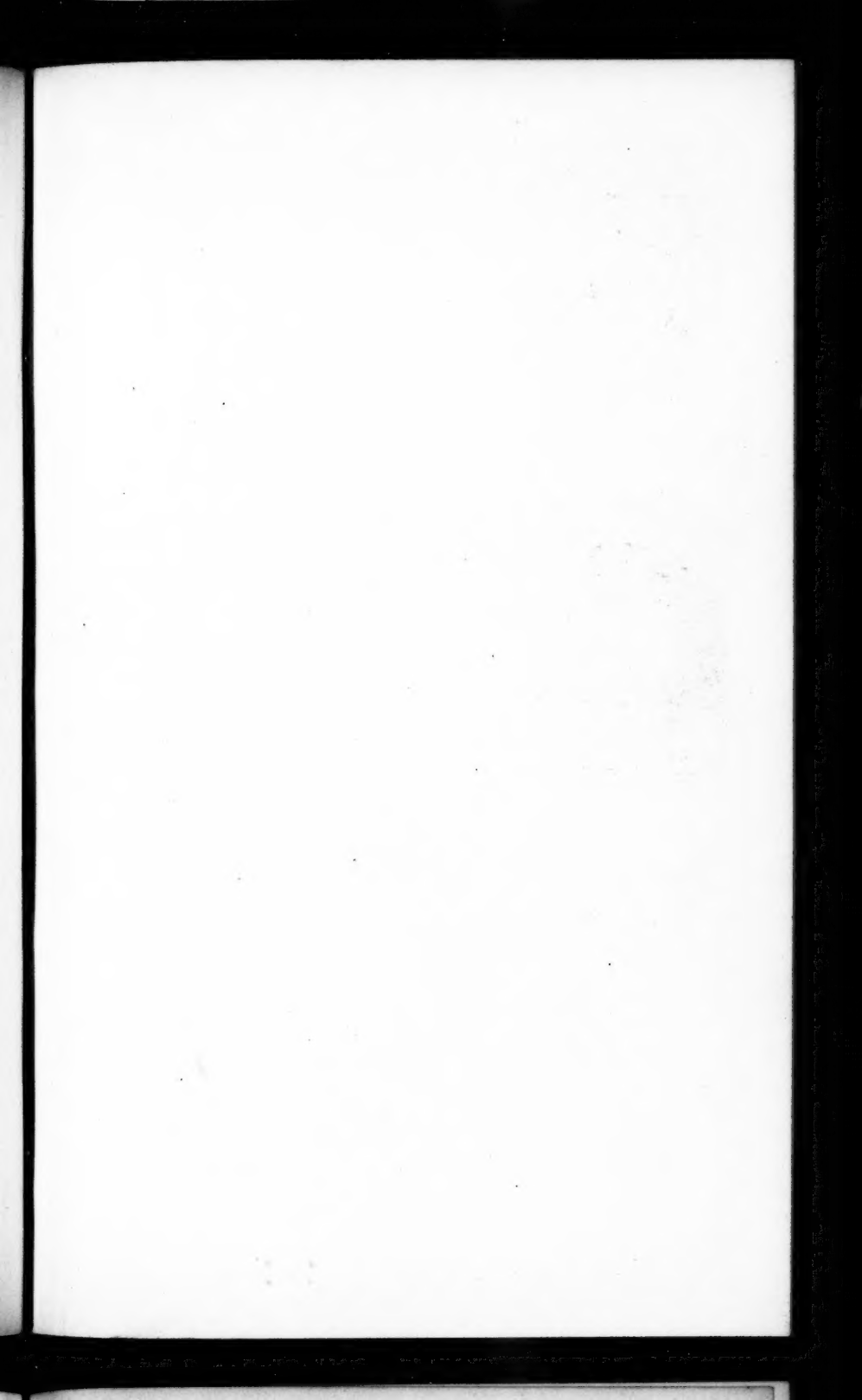
UNDER the stars. A silvery fountain springing
 From the hot sand, beside a stately palm,
 With its cool touch to the parched pilgrim bringing
 Visions of home, amid the desert calm ;
 Of summer boughs, their tender shadows throwing
 O'er broad-leaved sedge and lilies passion pale,
 Where over mossy stones and pebbles flowing,
 Ripples a brooklet down a grassy vale.

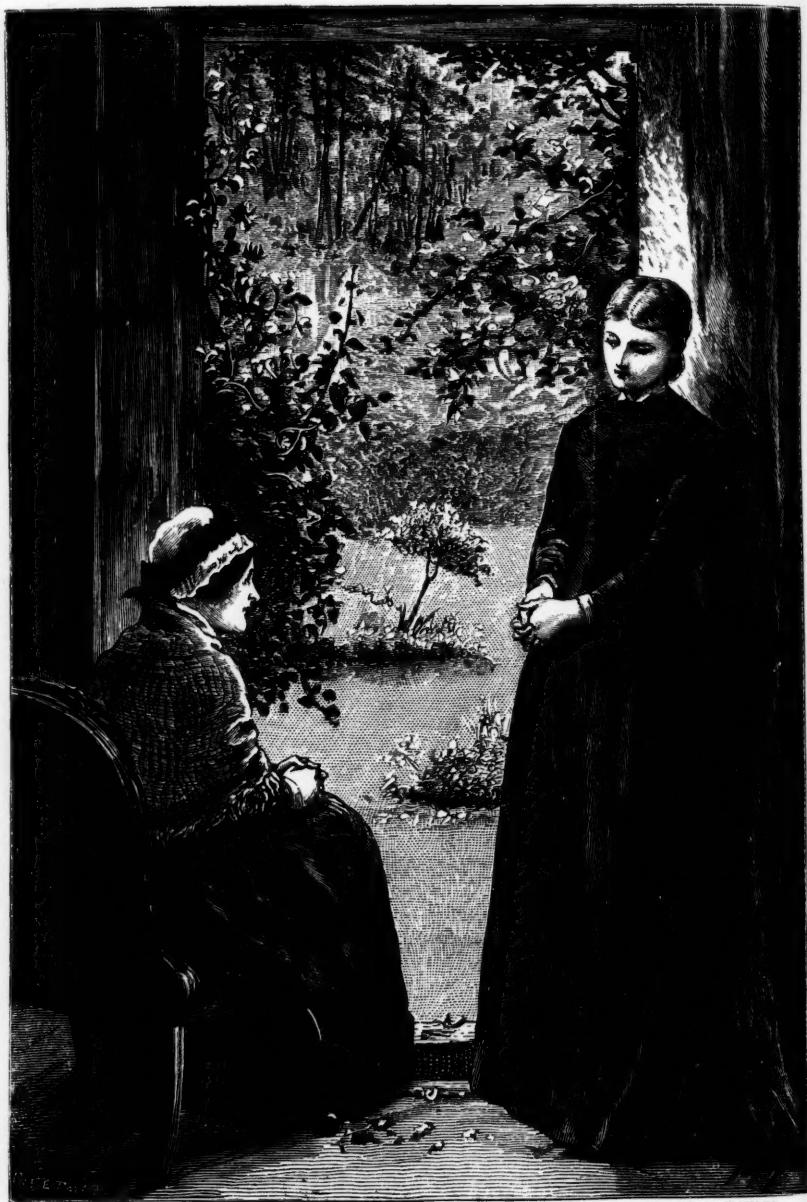
Under the stars, glad childhood's rosy dreaming
 In quiet hamlets set in moorlands brown,
 Under the stars, the ruddy watch-fires gleaming
 Around the walls of some beleaguered town ;
 And on the plain, warrior and war-steed dying
 Amid the bloodstained flowers and trampled corn,
 With broken shield, and lance all shivered lying,
 Where stood a mailed host at dewy morn.

Under the stars, a lonely vessel drifting
 On rocky shores, borne by the restless foam,
 And far away, soft winds of twilight lifting
 The casement leaves of some sweet woodland home.
 Murmur, O winds, while the cold moonbeams glisten
 Upon a coral reef, a stormy sea,
 Your dirge for one who nevermore will listen
 To your low whispers through the household tree.

Under the stars, far in the ages hoary,
 That with their mists our busy world enfold,
 Sybil and sage have striven to read the story
 Inscribed in their bright characters of gold.
 But faith, with clearer eyes their truths divining,
 Sees far above life's rainbow gleams and showers,
 E'en as the stars in God's own kingdom shining,
 Her treasures hid beneath the churchyard flowers.

J. I. L.





M. ELLEN EDWARDS.

R. AND E. TAYLOR.

A NEW APPOINTMENT.

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